

# TOP ACTION PHOTOS • INSIDE STORIES PLUS THE HOW TO OF WRESTLING

# **THE WRESTLING SCENE** By GUY LeBOW

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# INTRODUCTION BY MEL ALLEN



**Who's who—facts and figures—top stars in action and at home—life stories: stars of yesterday and today—great matches of all time—wrestling map of USA—rising stars—college—female wrestling—glossary of holds.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

My deep appreciation to Mel Allen without whose encouragement this book would never have been started.

Also my thanks to Toots Mondt without whose cooperation this book never could have been written.

A deep bow and salute as well to a battery of wrestling experts: Billy Johnson, Georgie Becker, Harry Finkelstein, George Bothner, Lord Leslie Carlton, Al Alexander, Ray Schwartz, Rudy Miller, Rudy Dusek, Fred Kohler, Don George, Emil Lence, Paul Boesch, Paul Bowser, Frank Tunney, Eddie Quinn, Paul Jones, Martin Thesz, George Kuzana, Bob HafTEL, Jesse James, Hans Hermann, Dick Sackoff, Al Kiefer, Pat Kiefer.

My best to numerous other people whose varied skills contributed assistance. And last but not least, heartfelt thanks to Dave Stanley for his sound advice and patient toil.

This is the first book of its kind about wrestling. Despite our most sincere efforts we know we have not included everyone and everything we would have liked to. To those wrestlers and those associated with the sport our most humble apologies. And, to readers everywhere, we welcome any suggestions you may have to improve our next edition.

**Photo credits: Acme News Service**

# The WRESTLING *Scene*

By GUY Le BOW

INTRODUCTION BY MEL ALLEN



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## INTRODUCTION By Mel Allen

"Hey, kid, you wanna rassle?"

That's been as great a part of the daily routine of youngsters as eating and sleeping. But in the last couple of years I've found that youthful enthusiasm growing by leaps and bounds and extending to and through the adults. Through my daily broadcasts of the New York Yankees' baseball games, the All-Star and World Series classics, and topnotch football clashes, it has been my good fortune to get around this wonderful land of ours. And you would be surprised to find, as I have, boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 20 following up their questions about Williams and DiMaggio and Musial with a query such as "Who's your favorite wrestler, Rocca or Stanlee?" Pointed searches for information about individuals and records in the major sports were bracketed with excited questions on the revivified art of grappling.

Back home in New York City my good friend and colleague, Guy Le Bow, and one of the East's highly respected sportscasters, had been for several years leading the fight in the rebirth of the Grunt Game. Thus one day at lunch, quite naturally, I said, "Guy, what happens when you want some statistics on wrestling or wrestlers?" The rings under Le Bow's eyes deepened. Lifting his cup of coffee, which he drinks straight with 77 lumps of sugar, and taking several hurried sips, he replied shakily, "Mel, you just warmed up my twelfth ulcer. Statistics in wrestling are very difficult to run down. In the mornings I haunt the public library. Afternoons I bewitch the grappling promoters. Evenings I cajole the wrestlers in the dressing rooms, and late at night somebody carries me home. It's a pretty easy job, as you can see." Whereupon I suggested to Guy that if it were so difficult for him to track down facts and figures and stories, think of the fans. What of them?

The result of this conversation and, I know, months of work for Guy Le Bow, is this book, "The Wrestling Scene." Facts and figures, thrilling stories never before told, the techniques, the inside, the everything. So, fans, get started on "The Wrestling Scene," which I heartily recommend, and by the time you reach the back cover of this book you'll be on your way toward being an expert. How about that?

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# I. WRESTLING: THEN AND NOW

THE TURNSTILES ARE singing a merry tune, announcing the triumphant recovery of the "fabulous invalid of sports"—wrestling. Prior to the 1946-47 season it had been in an incredible slump, having staggered through fifteen years of economic woe and box-office despair. During those poverty-stricken years, wrestling had skidded to a new low; some arenas had gate receipts equal to the take of a penny gum machine in a high rent neighborhood. Wrestlers worked for next to nothing. What they earned could hardly keep them in clean grey sweat shirts or steamroom payments. Today, wrestling is thriving, packing in enthusiastic, cheering, jubilant, wrestling-conscious citizenry from New York City to Shreveport, La. Last year, the box office netted more than \$36,000,000 throughout the U.S.A.—which makes even the figure-happy accountants swoon. All this tremendous activity and sell-out gates are taking place in an era in which movies cry about "lost audiences" and the return of 1 cent sales.

Box the compass, and anywhere you go the marqueses are ablaze with lights trumpeting forth: "Wrestling Tonight." The enthusiasm is equally fervent from a small theater-arena (The Lyric Theater, Knoxville, Tennessee) to the vaunted sports palace, New York's Madison Square Garden. The sport, aided spectacularly by television, in many parts of the country, you can turn a TV knob and get two and three wrestling shows a night, is winning greater audiences. There are things happening, too, that are even surprising veterans of the mat game, familiar with the game from Farmer Burns to Gene Stanlee.

Thousands of kids are as familiar with the holds, the Argentine back-breaker as they are with Hopalong Cassidy's "Steady there, pardner." And the sport has also caught on fantastically well with women. The contagious wrestling enthusiasm has gotten so strong that it has even bewildered Bob Cooke, sports editor of the *Herald Tribune*. Writing from California, he recently observed: "Celebrities like Sheik Lawrence of Arabia, Argentine Rocca, and the famous wrestling team of Garibaldi, father and son, are destroying the prominence of names like Gable and Turner."

The wrestling boom is not a "manufactured" craze but is as real as a laundromat. Consider this striking item from the *Buffalo Evening News* of January 1950. Without shrill ballyhoo, this item—a break-down of attendance figures to sports events—elo-

quently reveals the wrestling success story. Figures may not shout, but these figures from that key industrial city in the Empire State show which way the wind is blowing.

Date	Sport	Crowd
Jan. 14	Basketball	11,031
Jan. 15	Hockey	6,219
Jan. 17	Boxing	3,106
Jan. 18	Hockey	5,018
Jan. 19	Basketball	12,053
Jan. 21	Wrestling	12,296

Wrestling had outdrawn every major sport—the surest barometer of audience reaction.

The dramatic surge of wrestling has reached a point where now top wrestling bouts outdraw boxing matches. Many ask why. Why has wrestling catapulted to glittering eminence once more after being kept flickeringly alive in tiny gyms and at colleges? What elements are there in modern wrestling that it so attracted such a loyal TV video audience? In many regions throughout the country, a wrestling telecast will draw a higher Hooper and/or Nielsen rating than the star entertainers, including "Mr. Television"—Milton Berle. What singular power does wrestling have to come up from the mat after fifteen years of a half-dead existence?

Several factors are behind the spectacular growth of wrestling in the U.S.A. and Canada. They are:

#### 1. Rise of new stars.

2. Television. Telecasts offered the viewer a seat on the ring-side apron, and fantastically effective closeups. It also acted as a phenomenally successful promotional medium. Get viewers to watch, and soon they'll buy tickets.

3. Impetus of World War II, and the heroics inspired by the Commandos, British parachutists, Carlson's "Gung Ho" Raiders. These hand-to-hand fighters thrilled the nation and their deeds established the basis for appreciation of wrestling once again.

4. Young, growing generation. youngsters who blossomed during the war years had never had an opportunity to witness wrestling. When given the opportunity, they seized upon it with great glee and enthusiasm.

## THE NEW STARS SHINE

There are three definite ways to tell when an athletic star rockets to the top: the mysterious word of mouth, whoopla, and financial-wise, gate-appeal. Today, wrestling boasts of a raft of new wrestling stars who fit these requirements perfectly. The wrestling scene, as black as an over-used mat, prior to 1940, got a terrific shot in the arm, thanks to them. Their names are on the tongues of every wrestling enthusiast—Rocca, Gene Stanlee, Buddy Rogers, Eagle.

There's one major reason why the new stars have caught on and acquired the golden spangles of crowd acclaim and a huge TV following. The new stars have opened up wrestling. Rather than the old-fashioned Greco-Roman orthodox kind of wrestling style, they've added to it—the flying assaults, the thundering battering ram tactics, the rope-to-rope assaults. Consequently, as one observer put it, "Fans don't know what will happen the next second." Unmistakably, the present day boom can be traced to this: that the new stars take their chances. It results in greater excitement, bone-bruising and doctor's bills, but *c'est la guerre*.

Their gate pull? Promoters practically get down on their knees trying to secure these top wrestlers, for these men are terrific audience bait. In them are combined youth, agility, strength, endurance, ring savvy and a fiery will to win. Some of them will remain and glisten as among the best in the history of U. S. wrestling. Call it hero worship, adulation, escapism, projection, the fact remains that when these boys are on the mat, hearts beat faster and supercharged excitement grips thousands. Their advent on the wrestling scene is remarkable, for one big reason: Wrestling does not have the elaborate farm system, scouting apparatus, and alumni beagle-hounds that baseball and professional football boasts.

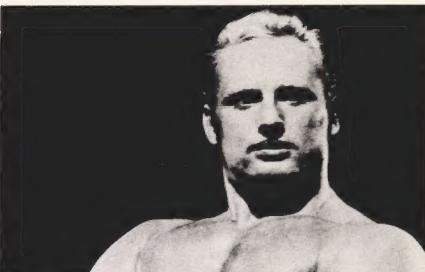
## WRESTLING ON VIDEO

When radio discovered sports broadcasting—fights, baseball—it also made fumbling attempts to report wrestling bouts. But, somehow, even in the "Golden Age" of wrestling—the early 1930's, no single broadcaster managed to project the color, the ring subtleties going on in the ring and on the canvas. There is something about wrestling that defies sheer word reporting. Only when television came upon the scene did wrestling get adequate coverage in relation to other sports; and when it did, the Hooperatings jumped upward at a speed that even amazed the pulse-takers. Wrestling is now a major

## TOP MAT NEWCOMERS



ANTONINO ROCCA



GENE STANLEE



BUDDY ROGERS



DON EAGLE

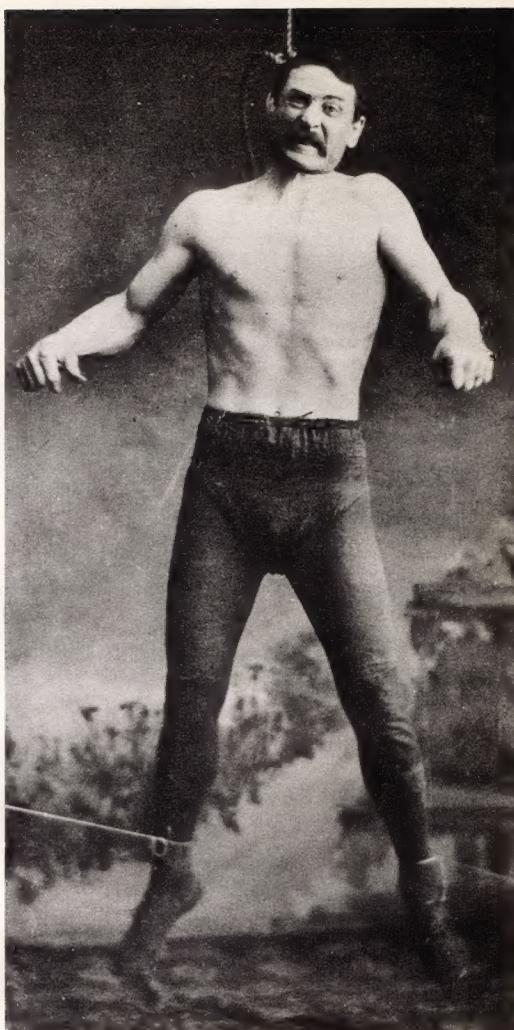
TV video attraction. Today, the video audience is increasing daily and by 1951 it is estimated that more than 8,000,000 sets will be in home use. Which means greater and greater wrestling audiences.

Along with the TV wrestling coverage came the wrestling telecaster. Since most of his audience were new to the mat game, the wrestling telecaster has a two-fold problem. He has to keep apace of the bout. More than that, he had to offer viewers a clear basic analysis of the fundamentals of wrestling; the varied holds, the unique styles of wrestling, and many other factors that make wrestling a kind of brainy, physical chess match. But these individuals, telecasting from the ringside, have developed under pressure into a brilliant corps of wrestling telecasters, whose coverage is to be marveled at. In particular are to be noted: Ves Box (Dallas), Richard "Dick" Lane and Wayne Griffin (Chicago), Jim Gibbons (Washington). There are others who deserve accolades, unusual specimens—men who broadcast in that other medium, radio. Breaking all precedents in the history of sports coverage, they've managed to give listeners clear images of wrestling bouts—and their names are Harry Caray (WIL) and Bill Mazur, Buffalo. Nevertheless, wrestling telecasting dominated the scene through technological advantage.

## FROM COUNTRY FAIRS TO MADISON SQ. GARDEN

Early American wrestling history is tied up with literary threshing bees, pink lemonade and a "take on all comers" approach. The threads run as follows: First there was Indian rassling, rough, free-for-all brawls, and there followed wrestling matches on picnics when farm youngsters would take each other on at—all things—"literary threshing bees." For wrestling in its nascent state was an informal as devilled eggs box lunch. Probably the great development after that, that marked wrestling's change from an open air affair to a sport, supported by fans, was when wrestling linked up with country fairs, "the Big Top" and traveling musical shows. That marked the change, when people had to pay to see wrestling.

The great Farmer Burns, for example, one of America's greatest wrestlers and teachers, had to make a living with traveling units; he'd give wrestling exhibitions, and offer to wrestle anybody for a purse. Wrestlers also kept solvent by attaching themselves to county fairs; when they offered to wrestle anybody in the audience and there was a taker, they'd quickly put up rope barriers, improvise a ring, and charge admission.



© International News Service

LIKE MOST EARLY AMERICAN WRESTLERS, the famous Martin (Farmer) Burns earned a living by giving exhibitions at county fairs and circuses. This rare photograph, recently discovered, reveals Burns prepared for a theatrical trick of strength, and hints of the show business flavor that dominated that era.

So it went in the early 1900's—catch-as-catch-can. And if there wasn't anybody willing to wrestle, wrestlers would also offer to box anybody.

The big turn in wrestling history came around 1908—the date of the first Gotch-Hackenschmidt match, which attracted thousands to the Dexter Park pavillion in Chicago. Up to that point, wrestling didn't have well-organized circuits. Also, and this was true of organized baseball and football—the absence of radio, TV, national picture magazines and weeklies—made it difficult to make national sports celebrities. Years of grassroots exhibition, appearances at fairs, theatres, circuses, however, built up the Gotch-Hackenschmidt gate. Finally those years of hand-to-mouth existence paid off, as wrestling became a national sport and everything that it entailed—booking offices, promoters, matchmakers, publicity, personnel, circuits.

From 1908 to World War I, wrestling grew to popularity like the penny arcade "peep" movie machines. Stars and their foibles—Gotch, Hackenschmidt, Farmer Burns—entered the sports fans' vocabulary. Everybody apparently wanted to learn to wrestle and to satisfy the consuming interest a flourishing correspondence school business was built up based upon lessons and illustrations by Farmer Burns. Letters pinned to dollar bills were rushed in to Omaha, the school's address, from all over the world—big cities, London, Paris, Cape Town, Tokyo.

One oblique offshoot of wrestling was the fantastic interest it stimulated in body-building. Wrestlers up in the ring, their bodies brawny, beautifully proportioned, prodded a rage—men started for the nearest gym, buying pulleys, arm-stretchers, and bar bells. Bernard McFadden started a body building magazine titled "Physical Culture"—featuring bronzed men on the cover, strong, determined, with huge chest expansion. The whole trend started the image of masculine beauty that women could whistle at—and the ads told the story: "I was Scrawny and Run Down. Look at Me Now." And truth to tell, scrawny youngsters by diligent gym exercise, weight-lifting soon filled out their shrunken, caved in look, and enjoyed new-found health and vitality. All this can be credited to wrestling and the power it exercised indirectly.

There followed the "Golden Age of Wrestling"—from the 1920's—up to the early 1930's. Youngsters at the time had primitive silk screen, called "cockamemmes" Decals—which you put on your hand with spit—and some of them were of wrestlers in action. Small riots attended crowds anxious to secure a vaunted place to see Jim Londos-Jim McMillen bouts, or the famous match between Strangler Lewis and Jim Londos.

The mat game flourished with arenas holding wrestling bouts criss-crossing the country; whistle-stops had exhibitions in local barns. All this occurred without the assistance of radio and the silvery voices of Graham McNamee or Ford Frick, pioneer sportscasters. For radio, then building a reputation sportscasting, "The Happiness Boys" and remotes—read free shows—found it difficult to give listeners the hold-by-hold account, for reasons discussed elsewhere. And around the country, in cafeterias, one-arm lunchwagons, in tenements, in quiet residential homes and farms, you'd hear fevered talk concerning the prowess of the kings of the mat world—Strangler Lewis, Jim Londos, Earl Caddock, Dick Shikat, Joe Stecher, Jim McMillen, Ed Don George.

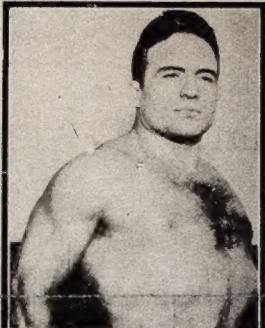
In the thirties, though hard hit by depression, wrestling could still stage sell-outs at the Madison Square Garden in 1931, 1932, featuring the fabulous Jim Londos. The first gate netted \$51,000; the second did similarly well.

There were small riots trying to get in. Yet the depression, the scarcity of the amusement dollar—and managerial problems—helped bury wrestling. It still flickered, here and there, in small arenas, and in college gyms, yet wrestling was singing the blues. Wrestlers quit the game, and turned to other jobs to keep themselves alive—it was the lowest the country—and wrestling—had skidded.

By 1940 it picked up a little, but then the war burst as Hitler and his allies sought to dominate the world. Postwar, the wrestling scene took on added health—for the reasons stated—psychological conditioning, the rise of new wrestling stars. The wrestling fan himself came into clearer focus: he knew about holds, wanted to know more about his favorite wrestlers, and wrote for pictures, statistics, and debated the quality of the headlock.

## ANOTHER "GOLDEN AGE"

Recently, somebody offered \$75,000 for Don Eagle's contract. The manager of the 24 year old Indian wrestler turned it down and laughed, "Why, he makes more than that in one year." This incident touches on the way wrestling has shot up with its extraordinary gates and audience-pull. Wrestling truly has come up from the mat and today it's skyrocketing up—and up. Today, promoters are offering high percentages to attract top cards. Expert observers believe that attendance will shoot up 20% in the



JIM LONDOS

# Believe It or Not

**Every Show Is Bigger  
and Better**

Were you at our Wrestling Show last Monday Night ? Or the week before ? If so, you saw the greatest wrestling ever staged- You heard more genuine enthusiasm and saw more smiling faces leave the Armory. Do you want to forget there ever was a depression ? Do you want to drive away the last semblance of the Blues, Then join the 8000 sport crazed patrons who will be at the matside this Monday night.

Ask the man or woman who attends wrestling !!

JACK CURLEY

## 71st REG'T ARMORY

34TH STREET AND PARK AVE., NEW YORK CITY

**Monday, April 9th, 1934, 8.15 P. M.**



SANDOR SZABO

Jim LONDOS  
— vs. —  
Sandor SZABO  
**TO A FINISH**

**Remember - Positively No Advance In Prices**

**WRESTLING PHENOMENA.** The amazing success of many wrestling bouts during the apple-selling 1930's. Wrestling, as this flier suggests, was genuinely escapist, admitting, "Do you want to forget there ever was a depression? Then join the 8000 sports crazed patrons who will be at matside this Monday night." Country-wide, however, wrestling suffered as did every sport dependent upon fans being flush.

coming 1950 year, going beyond 1949's figures—\$36,000,000 reported by the *Journal-American*. In many areas, though trumpeted more, and given shriller ballyhoo, boxing has fallen way down, and is way behind wrestling in audience appeal.

In *Sports Pictorial* there is this little but dramatic statistic from the Nutmeg state, Connecticut: "According to official figures from the state of Connecticut, wrestling doubled its attendance figures in 1949 over the previous year. While in 1948 only 37,155 persons paying \$39,633 attended wrestling matches in Connecticut, there were 92,848 paid admissions in 1949, totalling \$105,932. The gain was the largest of any sport in Connecticut where 13 towns presented wrestling shows during 1949."

The signs keep multiplying daily of wrestling's tremendous growth—and the fact that it is achieving another shining revival. Two films are being cut now in the Hollywood laboratories offering sequences concerning wrestling, including Monogram's "Wrestling Jamboree." Republic has made a feature with Gorgeous George called "Alias the Champ." Key outdoor matches are being planned for the summer seasons. A good wrestler, participating in several bouts throughout the week, and not even as a main-eventer, makes \$300 to \$500 a week. A prominent Buffalo newcomer, Johnny Berend, reports a weekly take of approximately \$500.

An individual case in point is the ex-heavyweight boxing champion of the world, Primo Carnera. Broke, Carnera came to the

U.S.A., and was one of the first to win the golden spangles of success and high earnings through wrestling. Starting around 1947, Primo swung Northwest, down South—and up in New England, netting hundreds of thousands of dollars in tours. The *Boston Globe's* Jerry Nason, for example, marveled at the phenomenon, when Carnera visited that city.

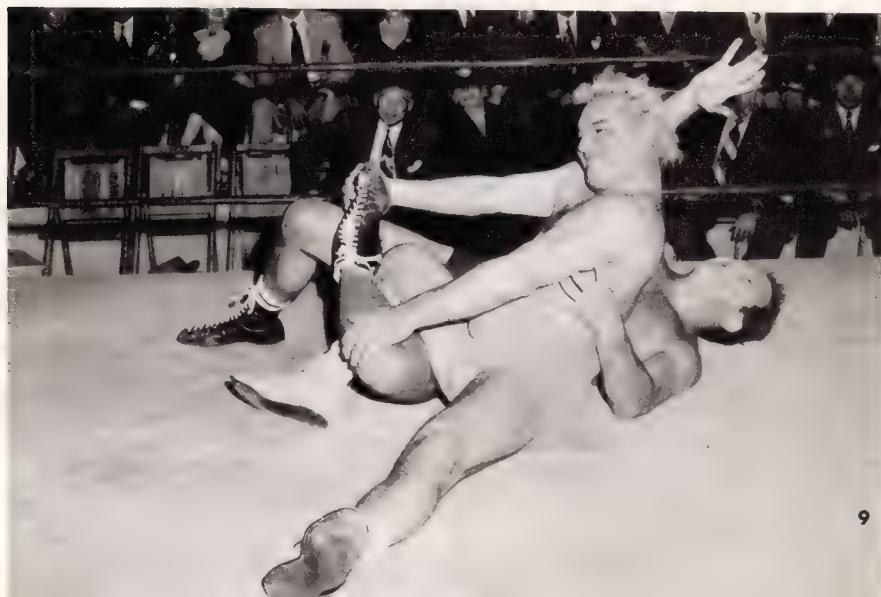
Quoting Paul Bowser, Nason's column reported: "The big guy is the hottest thing in my time. He's sold out every 'house' from Los Angeles to New Haven."

Bigger than Sonnenberg, who took Papa Paul's business out of the lodge halls and into the heavy money in the Twinkling Twenties?

"In New England," said Bowser, "Sonnenberg was dynamite at the gate, but there were a lot of places where he didn't draw. From coast to coast I've never seen anything like Carnera."

Today, it is a major sports industry, attracting millions of fans to the bouts, which are held nightly throughout the country. Though rivalling canasta and drive-in theatres, it is achieving a fabulous success. Wrestlers at personal appearances are mobbed, and when they walk down streets, they are easily recognized, according to the *New York Times*, as a "movie star." And only in 1940 the *New York Times* laid a wreath on wrestling with a piece, "Mat Game on Down-grade." Apparently, wrestling cannot be dislodged from the hearts and minds of millions of sports fans throughout the country. It is here to stay.

HOLLYWOOD taking a cue from the wrestling boom has several films in the can concerning wrestling. Already in release is Republic Pictures production, "Alias the Champ," starring Gorgeous George.





OLD-TIME WRESTLING. Wrestlers years ago as this print indicates didn't have an upraised mat. Wrestlers apparently grappled on soft sand. They didn't wear any trunks

but a kind of long winter-underwear uniform. It's a far cry from modern wrestling with the modern steel and concrete stadia, upraised rings, and spotlights.

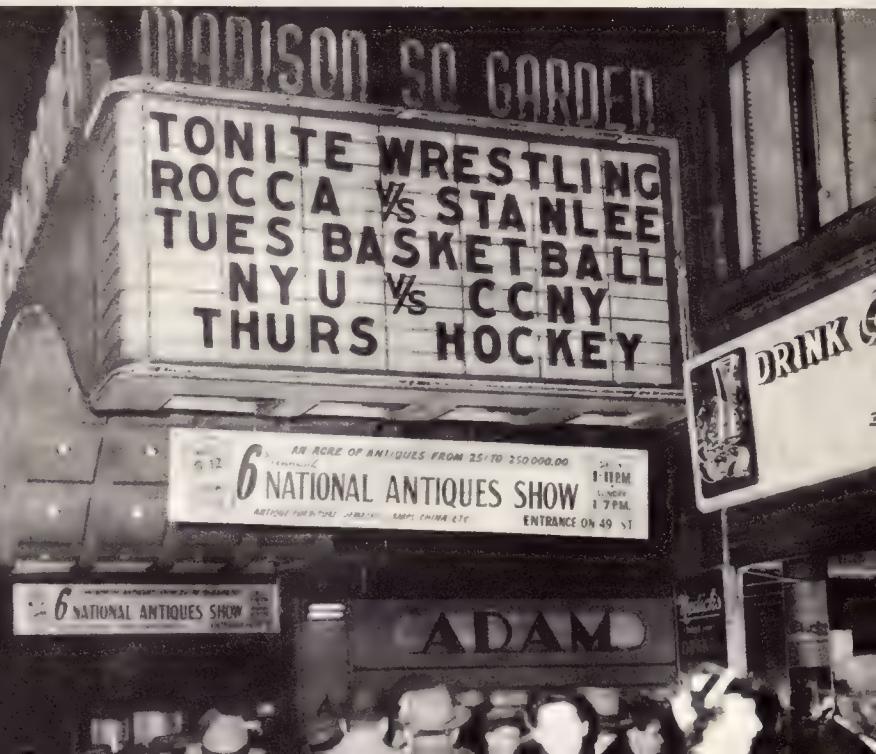
## 2. AMERICA'S TOP WRESTLING STARS

AMERICA'S TOP FLIGHT wrestling stars, employing the yard-sticks of wrestling skill, acclaim, gate-appeal (usually, all three are linked together) can't be rated in any 1-2-3 order. For as yet, many of the wrestling stars have not met each other in a round-robin elimination tournament. Since there hasn't been any kind of competition between leading stars in varying regions it would be unwise to make any subjective choices, and offer arbitrary ratings. But there has been enough action in the post V-J day years to accumulate enough first-hand mat evidence to justify the selection of a broad grouping of America's top grapplers.

Before going into the actual listings, it might be wise to jot down some notes on the relationship of the star system to wrestling's spanking prosperity. The star system in wrestling—and it bears a resemblance to

its glamour equivalent in Hollywood, baseball, football—is something that has bothered the experts. Sometimes you can make a star, and sometimes, not all the mimeographed releases, whoopla, ballyhoo, and cheese-cake can make a star out of an eager candidate. How many starlets actually become Hollywood stars? In wrestling, fan interest seems to fall into a complex but neat pattern. Wrestling fans now require that wrestlers be colorful as well as skillful. They want to get a "feel" of a personality as well as to enjoy cold wrestling skill. They like to cheer somebody and boo another, and you have to have targets for both. There's a vague sports democracy about it all; the fans can make and break stars. Based upon opinions culled from the top promoters and sports experts throughout the country the following twenty-five wrestlers are considered the nation's top.

A FORMIDABLE FACTOR in the golden wrestling revival is the fantastic "gate appeal" of America's star wrestlers.



## ANTONINO ROCCA

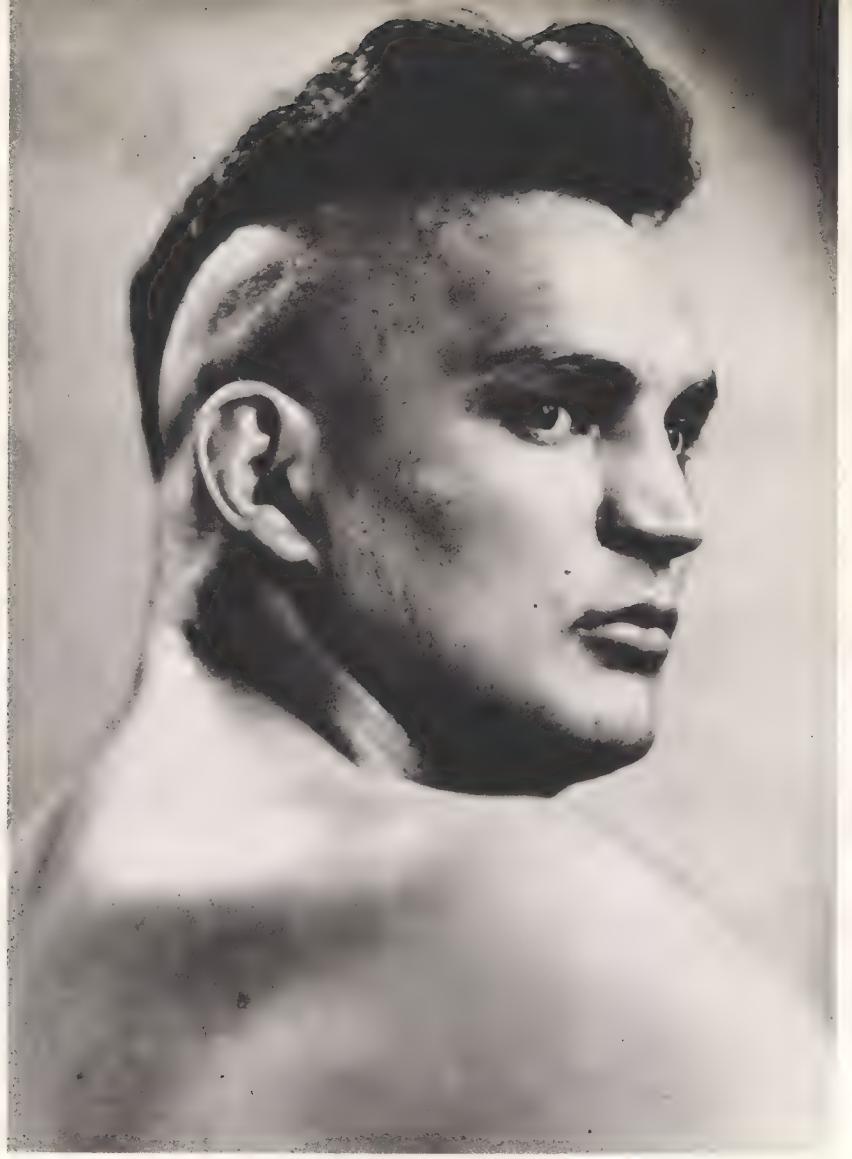
Probably the most powerful box-office attraction in wrestling today is intense-eyed, 27-year-old Antonino Rocca, who stalks opponents with cat-like grace before he unleashes with his dazzling feet-first style. Though born in Northern Italy—he weighed 12 pounds at birth—Rocca now makes Argentina his home. Rocca is a big favorite with Latin America's cafe society set. Rocca got into wrestling when friends persuaded Kola Kwariani to watch Rocca play rugby which Rocca learned to play as a university student. Kola's eyes sparkled as he saw Rocca scoot down the field, leap into the air with powerful force. From then on Rocca's career is one of big-time gates, top grosses from Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium to Madison Square Garden, where he drew more than \$100,000 in two matches with Gene Stanlee. His physical specifications are worth noting. Stripped, he weighs 226 pounds. He has a 20-inch neck, 19-inch biceps, and is 6 feet tall.





#### M.R. AMERICA, GENE STANLEE

Does weight-lifting tend to harm a wrestler? For a long time, wrestling enthusiasts have been unable to agree on this point. Recently, those who said that weight-lifting, by building the body, helps a wrestler, are pointing with unmitigated pride at Mr. America, Gene Stanlee. Stanlee, born on Chicago's Northwest Side 26 years ago, developed one of the most perfect physiques ever seen. When Stanlee treads through the ropes and unpeels his colorful jackets that cost upwards of \$200, audiences, even watching the event at remote TV sets, sigh. His body is perfectly proportioned, and a lot of it can be credited to weight-lifting. And the weight-lifting hasn't slowed him up or made him muscle-bound. Currently one of America's greatest draws, Stanlee at 26 is a top sports money-maker. He's six feet and his fighting weight is 215. Stanlee is that rare sports personality—a glamorous figure, who at the same time, wins grudging respect from wrestling enthusiasts on his grappling ability alone.



### D O N   E A G L E

When a wrestling matchmaker is on the phone scouring for talent, just listening to him will reveal the way new wrestling stars have shot up. Today, practically every matchmaker in the U. S. spends part of the day trying to arrange for a bout featuring Don Eagle, certainly one of the most colorful wrestlers to appear in many years. Looking like a college youngster who just wandered out of a physics class, Eagle's appearance has won him a nation-wide following. But his popularity is not on looks alone, but on sheer wrestling ability. His wrestling skill and savvy can be traced to the guiding hand of Chief War Eagle, Don Eagle's father. War Eagle had been a junior heavyweight champion himself years ago. Eagle started out as a professional boxer but changed to wrestling after a brilliant start. Eagle is a native of Caughnawaga in the Province of Quebec, Canada. Prior to boxing and wrestling he was one of Canada's outstanding lacrosse players. His most famous hold is the formidable and painful Indian death-lock.

### LOU THESZ

Though Lou Thesz has acquired most of his prominence in St. Louis, his fame reaches every region where topflight wrestlers are appreciated. For this black-haired son of an itinerant Hungarian shoe-maker is undoubtedly one of the most formidable matmen in the U.S.A. Lou was born April 26, 1916, and from the beginning revealed sparks of wrestling greatness when he copped all the scholastic wrestling titles in St. Louis. From the time he first entered professional competition, Thesz came along at a rapid pace. His first important triumph came when he pinned George Zaharias in short order. There followed wins over such members of the wrestling élite as Pat McLeary, Hans Kampfer, Man Mountain Dean, Bobby Bruns and countless others. Thesz's fighting weight is 225. He stands 6 feet 1 inch. Thesz is considered the master of the Jim Londos airplane spin which grows out of a crotch hold.





## GORGEOUS GEORGE

If Gorgeous George were to pay a clipping service for every mention of his name he'd go broke. For Gorgeous George is one of America's most publicized sports personalities. He's been featured on the top radio programs and wherever he has appeared attendance records topple. This is pretty good for a plain Nebraska boy. It is not generally known but George started out first as a light heavyweight boxer. He deserted the ring for the mat, and today he has a lot to show for his vocational change. He has an impeccable valet, Jeffrys, a black limousine approximately two blocks long, and a ranch in Oregon, where he raises turkeys. Though his valet sprays the ring with delicate perfume before the advent of his master, there is nothing delicate about Gorgeous George. He's a tough, rough battler. His fighting weight is 210. He stands 5'9".

## PRIMO

Recently, while on a South American tour, Primo Carnera had occasion to make inland road trips to meet wrestling engagements. His car would often stop for gas at a dinky gasoline station on a lonely road. Before long, crowds would gather. Farmers would stop working in the fields, and kids, bug-eyed at seeing a celebrity, would holler, "Primo! Primo!" Children tugged after Carnera wherever he went like tousle-haired puppies.

South America's frenzied enthusiasm for the ex-heavyweight champion of the world merely equalled Primo's gate-shattering tours in the U.S.A. Coming here—without ballyhoo—Carnera proved to be almost as big a box-office attraction as "South Pacific." In 1946-47 more than 700,000 fans thronged American arenas to see barrel-chested Primo grapple the best adversaries that America could offer.

Wherever he went he'd inspire headlines as this from the New York Sun: "Da Preem Packs 'Em In and Wins!" Trim, and in condition, Primo Carnera enters the ring at 267. His main offensive weapons: tremendous body slams and headlocks.



## ROUGH AND READY FRANK SEXTON

In his first match, Frank Sexton went into the ring equipped with his teacher's tennis shoes, basketball trunks, and a school sweater. After 15 minutes, he won his bout and got paid off—\$28 in cash. Some weeks later he attended a carnival, got into a battle royal, pinned everybody to the mat and received \$50. After that, Sexton decided that on the mat the pastures were greener. That was around 12 years ago, and today Frank Sexton is one of the idols of the mat game.

At Ohio State where he had gone to school, Sexton wrestled in intercollegiate competition. For fun, to relax from school and wrestling, he appeared at country fairs and 4-H meetings where he entered hog-calling contests. Usually he'd outshout them all. Today, opponents do the hollering when Sexton puts on the pressure. Sexton is six feet, and weighs 226 pounds. His favorite holds are standard scissors and headlocks, but he fastens them on with punishing strength.



### DANNY McSHAIN

The ropes, mat, and pillars reverberate when Danny McShain enters the ring. The California grappler is always moving in, attacking, never stopping, always taking the offensive and worrying his opponent. He's tough, and with his small toothbrush mustache he resembles that old Hollywood film star, Edmund O'Brien. To the mat-wise eyes who've seen him along the West Coast in such arenas as the American Legion Stadium, and the Olympic Arena, Danny McShain is obviously one of America's outstanding wrestlers. He is master of the juiced up modern catch-as-catch-can style, which is the nearest thing to human jet propulsion. He's black-haired and stands more than 6 feet.



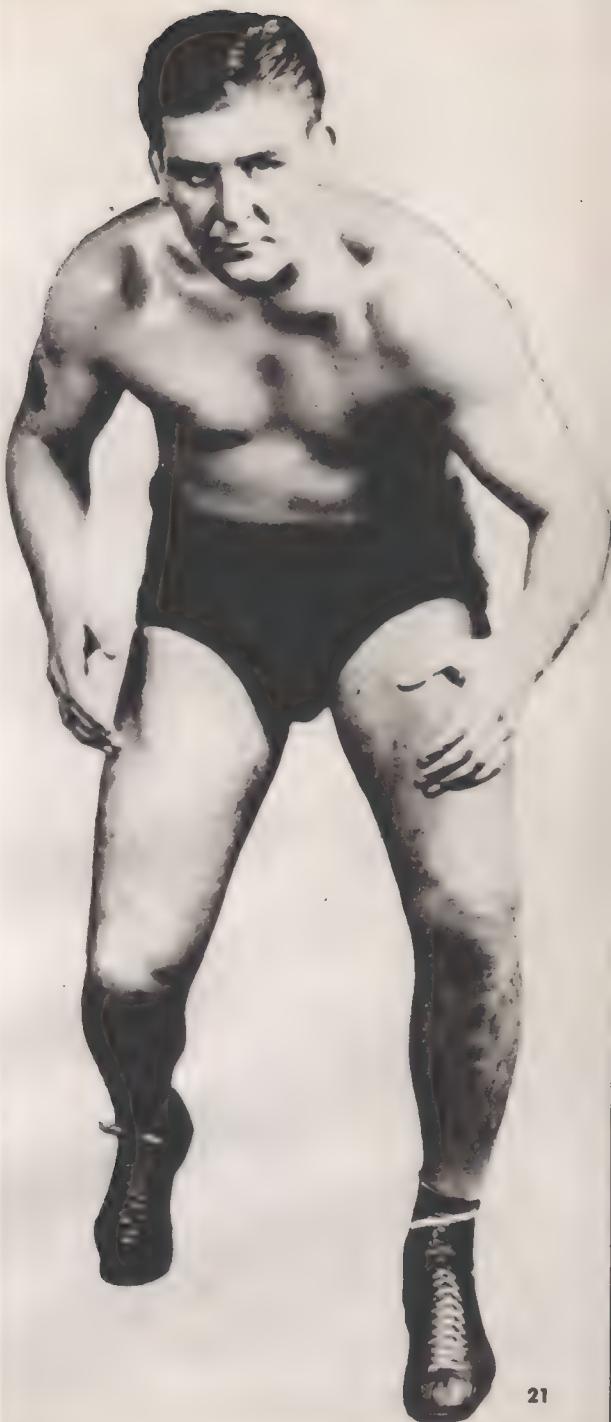


### WHIPPER BILLY WATSON

Whipper Billy Watson, the Canadian wrestling ace, earns upwards of \$50,000 a year. The income is derived not only from his wrestling bouts, of which he has more than 100 a year, but from lucrative sidelines, including a soft drink, and the manufacturing of custom-built bars and kitchen units. Both incomes, however, are built upon Billy's illustrious ring career. He started, unpretentiously, in haphazard scuffling on Canadian beaches and then graduated into the AAU circuit meeting other YMCA hopefuls. He developed slowly, first as a 185-pounder and only later blossomed into heavyweight. Today, he is one of the outstanding grapplers in the world. He got his nickname because of his perfect use of Dano O'Mahoney's Irish Whip. Billy, however, is putting the finishing touches on opponents with a new punishing hold of his own creation, the bone-jarring Canadian Avalanche.

### **Y V O N   R O B E R T**

Down in Washington a few years ago, Yvon Robert was tangling with Cliff Olson. They both were going at it, in the fast, modern style and suddenly there was a slight plop as if a small paper bag had burst. Yvon Robert's face grew pale. A doctor hurriedly made a diagnosis—broken leg. Wrestling fans thought the accident would be the end of Yvon Robert, but they reckoned without his fighting heart. Today, he's back bigger and better than ever, and along with Whipper Billy Watson, dominates the Canadian wrestling scene. Though he makes his headquarters in Montreal, his home town, Yvon Robert often swings down to Boston and Buffalo. He is one of the biggest drawing cards in Canada and his name on the marquee of the Forum makes the turnstiles tinkle. His fighting weight is 210.



## NATURE BOY BUDDY ROGERS

In the fabled territory of sports publicity, every personality has color. Often this is not so, but in the case of Nature Boy Buddy Rogers the description is accurate. Nature Boy is that rare personality who combines color and ability. And the fans have appreciated that from Teaneck, N. J. to San Francisco. Though he wrestles under the tag, Nature Boy, Buddy's real name is—as many wrestling devotees know—Dutch Rhode. He has criss-crossed the country many times, achieving popularity in all sections of the U.S.A. His body is perfectly developed and his fans always compare it to Gene Stanlee, known as "Mr. America." In the heavyweight mat sweepstakes he is considered one of the top contenders. Sports Pictorial recently called him the "new heavyweight threat." Dutch Rhode tips the scales at 227. He stands 6 feet.



## BILLY VARGA

Billy Varga's wrestling savvy has paid off plenty in the form of a nice wife, two boys and a palatial home in the Hollywood hills which is called "Varga-Var." Anybody choosing a list of the outstanding wrestlers in the U.S.A. would have to choose Billy, who is pretty prominent for his use of the abdominal stretch, which he employs as if he had the copyright on it. Billy was born in Cleveland, the son of Joe Varga, former European wrestling star. Married seven years ago, Billy now has two boys. Varga's best weight now is 200 to 208 pounds. Each year, Varga, a skiing enthusiast, spends three weeks on slats in the Yosemite.



## C Y C L O N E A N A Y A

Mrs. Jesus Anaya gets a wifely headlock on her husband, Jesus (Cyclone) Anaya, South American wrestling star. Travelling carnival wrestlers taught him the rudiments of the art of wrestling. Today, Cyclone Anaya is not only a power on the South American mat scene, but he is also one of the most talented wrestlers in the U.S.A. Along with a solid grasp of the fundamentals, Anaya possesses an extremely powerful body, and a new hold that has opponents pleading for mercy. It is the famous Cobra Twist, which is diagrammed and explained elsewhere in this book. The South American grappler is a quiet, unpretentious person. A native of Venezuela, Anaya is 30 years old. In the Midwest, he's one of the hottest attractions in wrestling. The Cobra Twist which he has developed has an enormous impact and explains why he is tagged "Cyclone." Anaya tips the scales at 210, and stands 5 feet 11. Square-jawed Cyclone Anaya has rejected several Hollywood offers to continue with his wrestling career.



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#### ERNIE DUSEK

For a good display of rugged, rough-house offensive mat strategy, fans know they can rely on Ernie Dusek, one of the most famous of the Riot Squad Duseks. Ernie was born in Omaha, Nebraska, which seems to be the birthplace of American wrestling. He has been climbing through the ropes ever since he was sixteen. He and brother Emil are one of the better tag teams in the country. He's 41, and his fighting weight is 235. He stands 5'10".

## LEROY MCGUIRK

Oklahoma is famous for its oil wells, sombrero-hatted governors, and as background for Rodgers and Hammerstein's classic. But in wrestling circles, Oklahoma is the wrestling cradle for one of its brightest stars—Leroy McGuirk. After a brilliant college wrestling career at Oklahoma A & M, McGuirk took a brief flier as a sports writer but those were the depression years. So McGuirk entered the ranks of professional wrestling where he shortly catapulted to the top. He is reputed to be the junior heavyweight champion of the world.





### BILLY GOELZ

**BILLY GOELZ**—5'8½", 190 pounds, Milwaukee. Pro football player, recognized in Illinois as Junior Heavyweight Champion of the World. His traditional rivalry with Walter Palmer has resulted in some of the outstanding matches of the year. Clever, fast, knows every hold in the book. Commands much respect and a big following.



### BILLY DARNELL

**TARZAN**—Billy Darnell is one of the finest wrestling prospects to come out of Temple University. Billy is famous for his airplane spin. He resides in Pennsylvania, is single. Billy enters his matches wearing a leopard skin. Before entering wrestling, he was a lifeguard. He spent several years in the Armed Forces in the Amphibious Division.



### GEORGE BECKER

GEORGE BECKER—33 years old, 215, 5'10", Brooklyn born, George is recognized as one of the best wrestlers in the business today. Ray Schwartz (Bob Becker) and he hold the Pacific Coast Tag Team Match Title that they won in 1949. He is married and has two girls. Learned his wrestling at the Cooper A. C. Favorite hold is the Alligator Clutch.



### GOLDEN SUPERMAN

GOLDEN SUPERMAN—A resident of Hollywood, California, where he and his wife and two daughters make their summer residence. Born WALTER PODOLAK, Supe won the title of Mr. Poland and also holds many international weight-lifting awards. He is 5'8" and weighs 220.



#### TONY MARTINELLI

THE CLIFTON CUTIE—TONY MARTINELLI, one of the best wrestlers in the country, has been wrestling for fifteen years. A resident of Clifton, N. J., where he owns a home that houses his wife and two children, Tony is one of the cleanest and strongest men in the game today. At one time he held Pacific Coast Championship.

#### IRON MIKE MAZURKI

IRON MIKE—MIKE MAZURKI, Hollywood actor and graduate of Manhattan College, is 6'4½" and weighs 235 lbs. Mike has been wrestling for 16 years. His favorite hold is the figure four scissors. He has made more than 35 motion pictures.





#### FRANK TALABER

Following through a family tradition wasn't hard for Frank Talaber. His father was the famous wrestling star, Lou Talaber. After collegiate wrestling at Armour Tech, Frank Talaber turned pro and won a reputation as a sound, smooth workman, who can put the "sensational" grapplers through a tough mat session. Now married, Talaber has a teen-age son of his own.

#### LORD LESLIE CARLTON

LORD LESLIE CARLTON is 6'2" and weighs 225 lbs. He wrestled in India. Lord Leslie is married and has a son. One of the finest weapons in use today is his dive bomber drop kick which is one of the deadliest "finisher" holds ever used.





### BOBBY BRUNS

**VERSATILE BOBBY**—A former lawyer and member of the U. S. bar, Bobby Bruns is one of the most widely travelled wrestlers in the country. Recently, he returned from a lucrative tour to South Africa. He was a member of the U. S. Olympic Water Polo Team. Single, he is an excellent dresser and is reputed to be a favorite of Hollywood stars. A protege of Jim Londos, Bobby weighs 225 and stands more than 6 feet.

### MARVIN MERCER

**MARVIN MERCER** is 28, 5'9" and weighs 195 lbs. He is recognized as the junior heavyweight champ and is the holder of the Strangler Lewis Belt. His best holds are his short arm scissors and his atomic drop kick which Bob Ripley called one of his wonders.



### **3. BIGGEST GATES DURING LAST HALF CENTURY: 1900-1950**

#### **1900 TO WORLD WAR I**

1908—*Gotch vs. Hackenschmidt*. Dexter Park Pavillion, Chicago. Approx. \$60,000.  
1911—*Gotch vs. Hackenschmidt*. White Sox Park, Chicago. \$87,053.

#### **"THE GOLDEN AGE"**

1929—*Ed Strangler Lewis vs. Gus Sonnenberg*. Boston Garden. \$78,000.  
1929—*Gus Sonnenberg vs. Ed Don George*. Boston Garden. \$62,000.  
1931—*Londos vs. McMillen*. Madison Square Garden. \$59,496.50.  
1931—*Londos vs. McMillen*. Madison Square Garden. \$60,216.  
1931—*Londos vs. Ray Steele*. Yankee Stadium. \$70,000.  
1934—*Londos vs. Strangler Lewis*. Chicago. \$108,000.

#### **MODERN WRESTLING BOOM**

1947—*Carnera vs. Jules Strongbow*. Cleveland Arena. \$21,000.  
1947—*Carnera vs. Von Schact*. Chicago Stadium. \$20,000.  
1947—*Babe Sharkey vs. Carnera*. Boston Gardens. \$19,000.  
1948—*Frank Sexton vs. Fred Von Schact*. Boston Gardens. \$22,000.  
1948—*Carnera vs. Sky Hi Lee*. Buffalo's Civic Auditorium. \$24,000.  
1948—*Carnera vs. Yvon Robert*. Montreal Forum. \$38,000.  
1949—*Stanlee vs. Rocca*. Madison Square Garden. \$51,000.  
1949—*Stanlee vs. Rocca*. Newark Armory. \$28,000.  
1949—*Gorgeous George vs. Yvon Robert*. Montreal Forum. \$24,000.  
1950—*Londos vs. Carnera*. Chicago Stadium. \$54,000.  
1950—*Stanlee vs. Rocca*. Madison Square Garden. Approximately \$53,000.

**BIGGEST GATE:** Jim Londos, struggling to keep his shoulders from the mat, with a strangle hold on the nose of Ed "Strangler" Lewis, claimant to Londos' world's heavyweight wrestling championship. During their match in Chicago in 1934, Londos retained the title.



## 4. WRESTLING NEWSREEL TOP ACTION PHOTOS

### WRESTLER LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

Atlanta: Jack Dempsey, former boxing champion, draws back a mean looking right as the Golden Terror advances because of a dispute in ruling during wrestling match here. Dempsey, who used to put fighters to sleep with the gloves, refereed the match.



### GARDEN GOES TO MAT AGAIN

New York: Argentina's Antonino Rocca hits Gene (Mr. America) Stanlee, of Chicago, with both feet in the feature attraction at Madison Square Garden where wrestlers returned again, Dec. 12, to the big time. Rocca won the match.



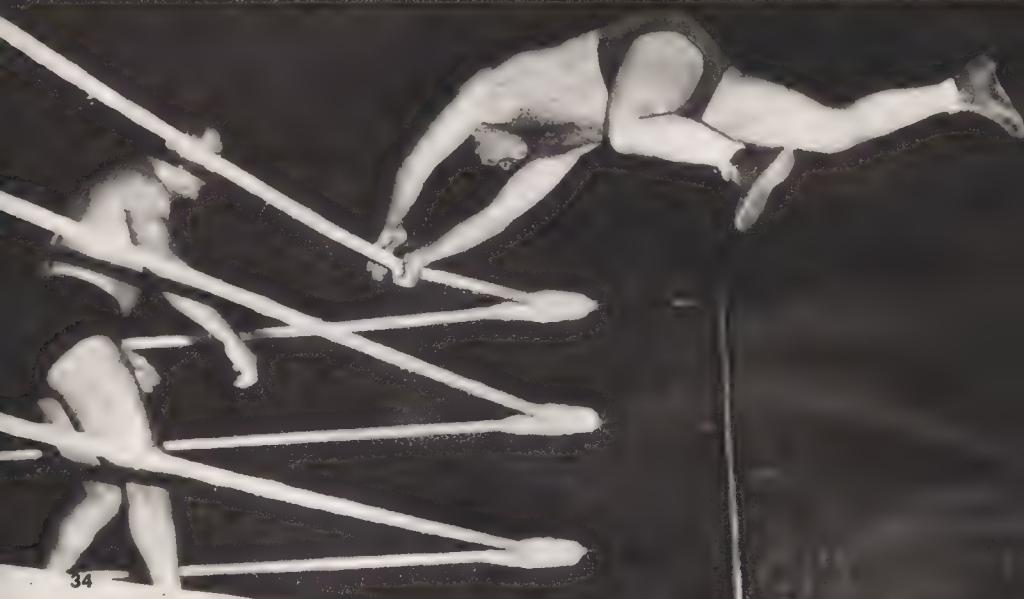


#### PRIMO VICTOR IN WRESTLING MATCH

New York: Primo Carnera, one-time world's heavyweight boxing champion, and now a wrestler, sits on the canvas at St. Nicholas Arena, New York, Oct. 23, as he holds opponent Bobby Burns of Chicago. Carnera was the victor in the match, taking 14 minutes and 18 seconds to defeat Burns.

#### HE CAME BACK TO WIN

St. Louis, Mo.: Wild Bill Longson uses his well-known escape tactic during his 86th successful St. Louis defense of his National Wrestling Association title last night, Jan. 24, before 15,180 fans in the Arena. Longson, who is eluding challenger Lou Thesz by hurling himself over the ropes, wasn't in trouble long. He came back and pinned his foe in 36:50.



### **WHATSA THE MATTER, PAL, SICK?**

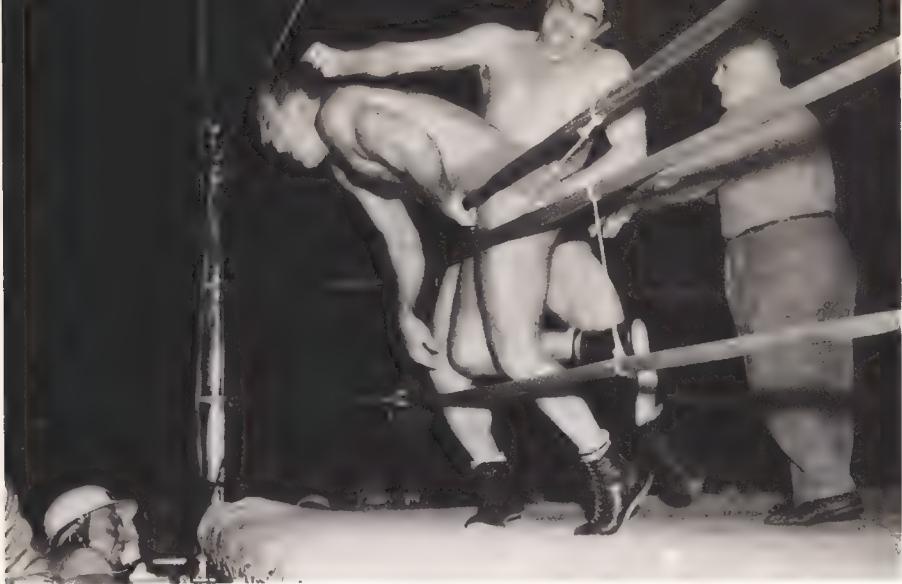
Cleveland, O.: "Two-Ton" Tony Galento of Orange, N. J., extends his sympathy to the "Masked Marvel." The Masked Marvel fell flat on his face after only four and one-half minutes of a scheduled one hour free-for-all, anything-goes bout in Cleveland Arena. Still unconscious when this picture was taken, the Masked Marvel slumbers on.



### **MIXED TAG MATCH GETS ROUGH**

Miami, Florida: This is the way that a mixed tag match works. "The Bat" has Lee (the Lion) Newman tied up, and his partner, Doris Dean, makes things a little difficult for Newman by getting in a few extra-legal tricks of her own. The referee is too busy counting the fall to pay much attention to such horse play, but the crowd loves it.





#### ROUGH

Brooklyn: Marvin Mercer, wearer of the Ed "Strangler" Lewis belt, almost catapults out of the ring when he misses his opponent, Chick Garibaldi, during a hard-fought match at Ridgewood Grove, one of the East's top neighborhood arenas. Telecasting from ringside apron is Guy Le Bow, shielded from danger by an air raid warden helmet.

#### BLIND WRESTLER WINS MATCH

Bronx, N. Y.: Martin Schlein, 12, of the N. Y. Institute for the education of the blind, has a reverse nelson body press over Ralph Epstein, 13, of the N. Y. School for the Deaf, during the 103 pound class of the Institute's gym. Schlein won by a fall.



#### THE PERFUMED WRESTLER

New York: The referee comes to the rescue as George in a fighting mood makes a determined effort to strangle his rival.



## 5. MOST PROMISING NEWCOMERS

YOU'LL FIND THEM at George Bothner's in New York City, or similar gyms throughout the country, working as hard as Belgian Percherons. They consist of a compact group of young matmen, as yet untouched by the blinding glare of hoopla. But their wrestling wizardry has already earned them acclaim as the most promising newcomers in the U. S. and Canadian scene. That's pretty high

praise for a sport which is usually stingy with praise. Some day these youngsters may be placed alongside and compared to the wrestling immortals such as Ed "Strangler" Lewis and Jim Londos.

Strong, determined and as tough as railroad spikes, these newcomers bear watching by all those interested in the further growth of wrestling.



CONSISTENT WINNER, with seven victories out of seven bouts, hefty MIKE PAIDOUSIS is skyrocketing into the top ranks of pro wrestling. The new mat star, 228 lbs., was discovered while on the University of Tennessee football squad. Grappling with New York's big-name draws, including Primo, Gorgeous George and Rocca, Paidousis' favorite play is the cobra hold.

MIGHTY MICKEY—MICKEY CARTOLANO, who started wrestling a year ago, is 202 lbs., 5'9", 32 years old and resides with his wife and two children in Brooklyn. Mickey learned his wrestling at the Cooper A. C. He served in the Navy during the war at Pearl Harbor. Has no special holds.

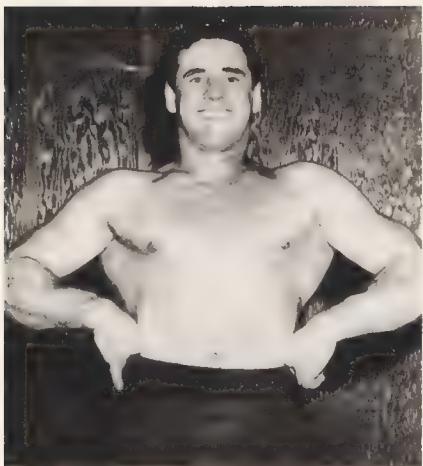


MR. QUEBEC—OVILA ASSELIN, 22, 6'1", 225 lbs. has been wrestling as a pro for four years. Resides in Montreal; single. Won the titles of Mr. Canada and Mr. Quebec in 1946 for the best physique. He was taught his wrestling by Yvon Robert. Played hockey in high school. His favorite holds are the Irish Whip and the drop kick.



ALVINO LUCENTI is 5'9", and weighs 197 lbs. Received his training from "Mighty" Mickey Cartolano, who urged him to turn pro. His hobby is woodworking. He is a graduate of Newtown High School in New York.





**BABY FACE**—One of the best looking rookies to enter the wrestling business, the 212 lb., 6', 20-year-old Johnny Berend is an all around athlete. He holds several weight lifting trophies and was the twelfth Naval District Champ while serving with the Navy for two years. Favorite hold is the chest crusher.

**MR. CUBA**—A graduate of the University of Cuba, 23 year old PEDRO ORTEGA is one of the fastest men in the ring today. He stands at 5'11" and weighs 210 lbs. He is a licensed pharmacist. He received his title of Mr. Cuba in 1945 for the best physique. Pedro is an acrobat and tumbler and has appeared in many nightclubs throughout Latin America. His hobby is dancing. He recently married.



**MR. NEW YORK CITY**—GENE DUBUQUE, 22, 5'11", 205 lb. former dancer, has been wrestling for two years. Brooklyn born, Gene attended Ft. Hamilton High School and studied for two years at Springfield College before entering wrestling. An all-around athlete, he won the title of Mr. New York City in 1947 for the best build. He learned his wrestling from George Lenihan.

**GRUMMAN GRAPPLER**—HANK DALEY, 30 years old, 5'10", 210 lb. former Grumman Aircraft engineer, resides in New York. The former lifeguard and endurance swimmer is now attending Adelphi College where he is studying to be a Physical Education teacher. He is also assistant coach of the College wrestling team which is the best in the New York area.





**CHICAGO'S FINEST** includes ex-Army captain RUFFY SILVERSTEIN, who turned pro in the Century of Progress bouts after a brilliant amateur career at the University of Illinois. In his first pro start he whipped Jim McMillen for the state title of Illinois. During the war, he put on exhibitions from Texas to Tokyo. The powerful grappler's favorite holds are the cobra hold and the headlock which Ed Lewis made famous.



**MR. CANADA**—Another fine young wrestling prospect is Sammy Berg, Jr. He is 6'4" and weighs 230 lbs. Sam won the title of Mr. Canada in 1947 for the best physique. He holds several swimming and diving titles and was one of the finalists in the World's Long Distance Swimming Meet in Toronto. He played hockey for the Montreal Jr. Royals before turning to wrestling. Sam is winner of the Guy Le Bow Trophy for the outstanding rookie in New York City.

**GEORGE BABICH**—29, 6'4", 229 lbs., in his first year as a pro wrestler. A graduate of Fordham, George played football for the Jersey City Giants and then coached the St. Peter's basketball team in 1946 after a four year stretch in the Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. Taught his wrestling by Mike Clancy. Giant swing is his favorite hold.

**BRONX BEAST**—A product of the Bronx, tough Rocco Colombo learned his wrestling while in the army. He is 21, 5'7½", and weighs 225 lbs. Single. Plays all sports including stick ball. Has no special holds. He prefers "to bat his opponent all over the ring." In his spare time, Rocco writes poetry or shoots billiards at the neighborhood academy.



# 6. THE BEST HOLDS IN WRESTLING

IN THE OLD days when wrestling fans saw Ed "Strangler" Lewis seize his opponent in his famous headlock, they knew that it was curtains for the opponent. Soon the dazed opponent, caught in the powerful cradle of "Strangler's" side and arms, would crumple and be pinned down easily. "Strangler's" unique headlock took years to perfect. Throughout wrestling, topflight wrestlers have developed particular holds suited to their physique, leverage, strength, speed; for what's good for one wrestler will be silly for another.

In wrestler's lexicon, a hold may be defined as a term or a position to whip your opponent. An individual hold is something that a wrestler has thought up that is somehow different than the standard styles, which basically are two: Graeco-Roman and catch-as-catch can. The Graeco-Roman style is a sort of highly stylized, rather slow form of wrestling confined mostly to the waist. The modern style is wide open. It is a mixture of Graeco-Roman, flying charges, aerial assaults and head-on collisions. The modern is far more dangerous. To build up an individuality, the modern wrestler develops a personal hold that is a variation or blending or refinement of the standard holds—the half nelson, hammerlock, toe hold and wrist lock. The fans love these personal holds which show creative thinking on the part of the individual wrestler. Some of the colorful new provocative holds are set forth in the following illustrations.

## ROCCA'S ARGENTINE BACKBREAKER

Rocca holds his man above his shoulders, with one of his shoulders boring into one of the nerve centers just below the spine of his opponent. With his right hand Rocca applies a tight chin-lock, a pulling chin-lock, and with his left hand around the thigh of his opponent just above the knee cap effects excellent pressure on three points. The result is a partial paralysis that leaves the opponent limp and helpless. It is caused primarily by the nerve pressure at the base of the spine.

In order to battle Rocca, technically an opponent must be in excellent condition. Rocca cannot apply the backbreaks effectively until his opponent has been completely done in, usually by a series of concerted drop-kicks. Certain opponents, like Big Rube



Wright as well as Irish Joe Corbett, have proven that Rocca's effectiveness as a wrestler is lowered if they keep the contest close to the mat. In this way he cannot get off his flying tackles and drop-kicks and other severe body-wearing maneuvers which are usually the prelude to the Argentine back-breakers. Gene Stanlee proved it most conclusively when he captured a draw with Rocca at the Garden before a capacity house. About 85% of the match was fought directly on the canvas with Stanlee effecting toe-holds and Japanese arm-locks, but above all, keeping Rocca grounded.

## MIKE MAZURKI'S FIGURE 4 BODY SCISSORS

Mazurki's key offensive weapon is applied from behind or, sometimes, the side. He winds his left leg around his opponent's body. His right leg crosses the left leg at the ankle, hooking the ankle and drawing back. The effect of the hold is this: it cuts off the wind and, at the same time, applies severe pressure on the stomach, causing nau-



sea. To make this even more effective, he rolls his opponent from side to side, partly because he wishes to offset the possibility of any loosening of the hold; for it is more or less agreed that three to four minutes represent the maximum strength output of any lock. It seems that rolling the hold continues to give the offensive wrestler an extra store of energy.

Several of the reasons for Mazurki's success with this hold are: 1—his exceptionally long legs, 2—making it possible to get this hold on a man of unusual girth, plus the fact that his strong, muscular legs are excellent for scissors-holds so that by the bulge of muscle alone against skin and bone the effect is painful. Yet he has enough fat around the muscle to cushion such pain as he might be subjected to when applying the hold.

There is a possibility of a counter, if Mazurki should loosen for an instant. The opponent could turn around, into the hold, face Mazurki, apply a chin-lock thus forcing Mazurki's head back, or a series of forearm smashes.

### SHORT ARM SCISSORS

Yvon Robert's spectacular short arm scissors is very painful. Here is the way the brilliant Canadian wrestler goes at it. Assume that it is going to be put on the left arm. He stands facing his opponent. He moves to grab his opponent's left arm with both arms and brings him to the mat flat on his back. He swings his right leg over his right arm and over his left arm and hooks the toe of his right foot behind the knee of his left leg. This will result in locking the victim's arm in a hooked position, with his right forearm locked inside the opponent's left elbow. This makes it impossible for him to do anything with his arm.

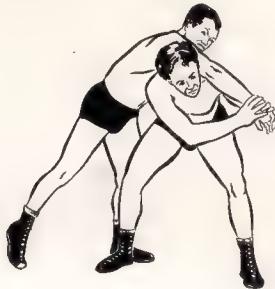
The man can be rolled around and tired out. This is not generally a pinning hold.

A clever opponent can get out of this because it leaves him with both legs, head,

neck, and one arm free, whereas the man with the hold has only one arm free. Usually the man in the hold kicks the other in the chin or locks his feet around the man's head.

### IRISH WHIP

The wrestler on the offensive grabs one of his opponent's arms and holds it straight out at the opponent's side. Then holding the opponent's wrist in both his hands he brings the arm up above his own head. He rotates the arm in a complete circle starting the circle in the direction in which the opponent is facing, flipping him over his back. The opponent falls to the floor with considerable force, momentarily dazed, and the aggressor can follow through with a pinning hold. His only hope of getting out of it is to try and land so that he is not dazed.



The hold usually leads to a pin. Many an arm has been dislocated when the opponent refused to go with the hold.

The most famous exponent of the Irish Whip, Dano O'Mahoney, pioneered with it in the early days.

### STEP OVER TOE HOLD

This is one of the oldest and most effective holds. It is applied by snatching a man's leg out from under him and throwing him to the ring on his back. The wrestler on the offensive grabs his opponent's left leg and wraps it around his left leg. The leg is grabbed with both hands around the knee and below the ankle. The aggressor faces in the direction of his opponent's head. He takes his left leg and steps over the left leg of his opponent and places his left foot under his opponent's left arm pit. He wraps the opponent's left leg around his own, causing great strain on the leg of the opponent. Then he bends toward the opponent. This can be used as a pinning hold.





The opponent uses his free leg to brace his other leg. He kicks his aggressor and pushes him away.

### SURF BOARD HOLD

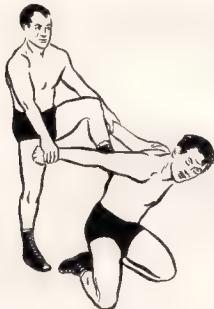
The man applying this hold looks exactly as though he were riding a surf board, using his victim's arms as ropes and his body as the board. It is applied from behind the opponent, usually from a kneeling or prone position. The man applying the hold places one of his knees in the small of the opponent's back and pulls back on each of the opponent's arms. This results in extreme stretching of the pectoral muscles and considerable discomfort in the region of the lower spine. An opponent must rely on un-



pressure by locking the feet. The effects are similar to those of a headlock. It causes throbbing in the head and, depending upon the angle from which it is applied, it can block the opponent's sight or hearing and also interfere with his breathing. It is not used as much as the pinning hold, but is used largely in getting out of holds where the victim has both his legs free.

### OKLAHOMA HAY RIDE

A provocative hold, the Oklahoma Hay Ride usually starts out by taking your man to the mat. With your left leg you grape-vine around his left leg. Then you reach over his body with your left arm under his furthest right arm. You force the arm behind your neck, apply pressure—and the pressure is painfully felt in the back. This hold is a natural for getting a man into a fall position. The main pressure is on his back, and if he refuses to put the shoulders to the mat you can apply pressure around the head. You keep pressuring the head, until he gives in.



usual shoulder strength to break out of this hold. His only alternative is to try and get his aggressor off his feet somehow.

### SEXTON'S HEAD VISE OR TOMAHAWK

Used chiefly as an offensive move, the head scissors is accomplished by pinching the head between the knees or thighs and applying



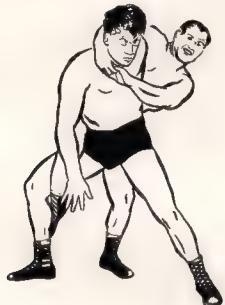
The more he holds out the more painful it becomes.

The best way to break it is to anticipate the hold before it is applied—and this is key to all wrestling strategy; the ability to anticipate holds. As soon as the opponent throws a grape-vine, the person being worked on should "sit out"—thus bringing him out of the vulnerable position. Then the

wrestler can reverse behind the opponent seeking to apply the Oklahoma Hay Ride. In this way, you avoid being hooked, and more than that, you can prepare to take the offensive. Once you have the hold, however, possibly only brute strength can break it.

### ABDOMINAL STRETCH

You grape-vine the opponent's right leg, twining it around from the back. You place your left hand and neck under his left arm; then you exert further pressure by placing your right hand around the back of the op-



ponent's neck. This is a submission hold that can be applied both from a standing position, and from the mat. The Abdominal Stretch, as its name implies, tears the opponent apart. Tall men lean upon the Abdominal Stretch a great deal as they have long legs and a longer reach. It can be quite easily applied on shorter men.

### ANAYA'S COBRA TWIST

The Cobra Twist is a grape-vine on one leg with a half-nelson from the opposite side. This hold is a punishing torture grip because of the two-way pressure; as the pressure is put on the half-nelson the body is being pulled in two directions. In this hold, the ribs are stretched and pulled out of joint.



With enough pressure applied the ribs can be pulled out of the spine. Usually when this hold is applied, people know that the bout is all over. Cyclone Anaya has won almost all of his matches with his famous Cobra Twist.

### NATURE BOY'S PILE-DRIVER

The hold used by Nature Boy consists of a head-scissors and is used by him differently from the ordinary pile-driver. The added ingredients result in extra ferocity and extreme danger to the trapped opponent. In the ordinary pile-driver, a man's head is held in a tight scissors and by the use of leverage, the forepart of his body is first lifted high in the air. He is then slammed downward, hitting the canvas with the upper part of his cranium. In the ordinary pile-driver the victim can usually prepare himself for the blow. Most of all he can strain himself against the pressure on his neck. But with Buddy Rogers, there is no warning forthcoming, for he applies a flying leap to his pile-driver often jumping as high as five feet or more in the air. A slightly less than well-conditioned athlete so caught would doubtless suffer a broken neck. One ingredient—the ordinary pile-driver lies prone on his back. But when Rogers leaps up, no one knows when the leap is going to come, and where the fall is going to be.

To begin with, it is dangerous to stand straight up with Buddy Rogers. A rather low crouch with the neck drawn in tightly would be helpful in squaring off with Rogers at all times. After careful scouting it has been noted that Rogers is most effective in this when he begins five feet from his opponent.

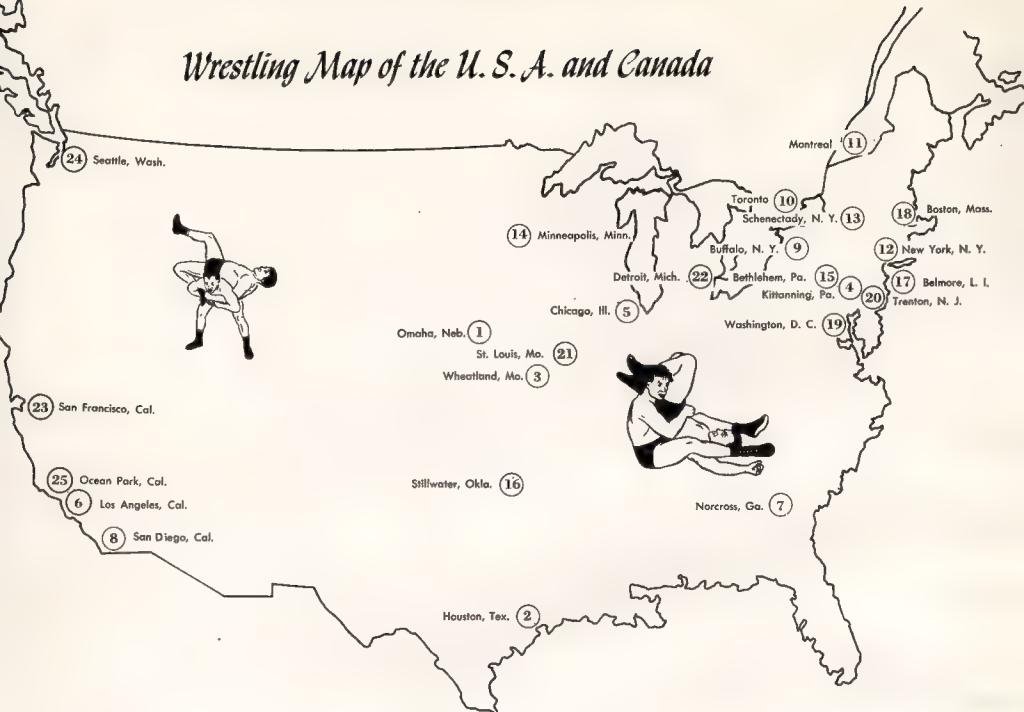
Thus the distance should be closed when squaring off, or when a wrestler needs a slight respite he should stand off sufficiently far to judge the move.

FEW PEOPLE KNOW that George Washington, the well-born colonist who was to lead his country in rebellion against the British, won a reputation as a sportsman in his youth. An accomplished high jumper and runner, he was known at one time as the champion wrestler of Virginia.

LINCOLN THE LIBERATOR, while still a lanky boy in Illinois, enjoyed wrestling. Historian Ida Tarbell, in her "Life of Abraham Lincoln," lists wrestling as one of his favorite pastimes.

WELL-ROUNDED MEN who admire the career of Ben Franklin, signer of the Declaration of Independence, who helped shape America's destiny, seldom hear of his warm interest in "the sport of men," wrestling.

# Wrestling Map of the U. S. A. and Canada



## 7. GEOGRAPHICAL LEGEND OF WRESTLING MAP

**1. SCHOOL FOR WRESTLERS.** Something unique in the history of wrestling was the school run by the great Farmer Burns at Omaha, Nebraska. In addition to teaching the art of wrestling by correspondence courses, Farmer gave private lessons to promising pupils at a specially equipped gym. There, he taught famed Frank Gotch and Rudy Dusek.

**2. STREAMLINED STADIUM.** In Houston top business figures are behind the construction of the Olympiad, a new sports arena with all modern improvements. It is an architectural joy and will be ideally designed for the comfort of fans watching wrestling matches.

**3. LADY WRESTLING CENTER.** Wheatland, Missouri, population 300, is the center of female wrestling guided and supervised by energetic Billy Wolfe. Wolfe manages fifty to seventy of the leading female wrestlers, including the recognized national champion, Mildred Burke.

**4. WRESTLING PICNICS.** In the quiet heart of the beautiful Pennsylvania Dutch country, Paul Bowser, famous Boston promoter, started to

wrestle at outdoor picnics. Farm boys of his era—the early 1900's—had a great fondness for wrestling, as did frontier youth.

**5. FAMOUS WRESTLING SITE.** The first of the great famed Gotch-Hackenschmidt matches thronged by the Windy City's wrestling fans took place in 1908 at Dexter Park's Pavilion, Chicago. That bout marked the change of wrestling from a haphazard affair to a major sport in the U.S.A.

**6. HOLLYWOOD, PLEASE NOTE.** One of the biggest industries in Hollywood, besides discovering starlets behind every drive-in hamburger establishment, is the creation of villains. The movie capital, however, could add macabre touches by signing up Baron Leone, wrestling's top West Coast villain. Leone's villainy is one of the star attractions at Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium.

**7. THE MAN MOUNTAIN.** Quietly and without headlines, Man Mountain Dean is now engaged in agriculture at Norcross, Georgia, his home town. Dean, who had a highly colorful career as a wrestler, had broken a leg and was forced to retire from the ring.

**8. JIMMY'S PLACE.** One of the West Coast's show-place farms running into hundreds of acres is that owned by fabulous Jim Londos. Londos occasionally breaks his routine as a California squire to enter the ring and show the newcomers that the old hand hasn't lost its skill.

**9. MAT HOTBED.** Buffalo, in upper New York State, is one of the hotbeds of wrestling in the U.S.A. Seeing that the fans get consistently high level cards and attractively matched bouts is Ed Don George, former Olympic star and professional wrestler.

**10. REALLY SOFT.** It seems to be a far cry from wrestling to the multi-million dollar soft drink field. But they are connected through the reputation of Whipper Billy Watson. This Canadian wrestling ace is so beloved that a line of beverages under his name—Whipper's Beverages—which includes all flavors, lime, lemon, grape, cream, are sold in great quantity.

**11. CANADIAN CHAIN.** In the Canadian wrestling scene there are two regional pivots—Toronto and Montreal. The latter holds bouts at the Forum—probably the largest sports arena in that area. Top-flight wrestlers shuttle between both cities which forms the basis of a wrestling network that extends even into the small rural areas and timber towns.

**12. GLAMOROUS GATES.** Though criss-crossed by neighborhood clubs and arenas, the sports showplace for New York City is still Madison Square Garden. And recently this major world famed arena was jammed to its steel girders with packed houses paying more than \$100,000 to see two Rocca-Stanlee bouts. Officially, this marked the return of wrestling to the big-time.

**13. HOUSE OF MAGIC.** For more than eight years a brilliant engineer worked up at G.E.'s Schenectady plant in its "House of Magic"—where most of the inventing goes on. In time he rose to that firm's hierarchy, notably for his work in perfecting the time-clock on cooking ranges. Housewives now may set a roast cooking and have the flame turned off automatically at the right time. The engineer's name is Hans Herman and today he is very active as a professional wrestler.

**14. PROMOTER STECHER.** Tony Stecher, the brother of the famous Joe Stecher, now has a powerful hold on wrestling in Minneapolis. He has done much to develop and train young promising mat stars.

**15. WRESTLING, COLLEGE STYLE.** Bethlehem, Pa., is a wrestling-mad college town, where thousands flock to see the Lehigh University matmen grapple with its Eastern NCAA rivals. Among its loyal rooters are neighboring steel workers who appreciate a sport which leans upon a mixture of science, skill, and brawn.

**16. THE AGILE AGGIES.** In Stillwater, Oklahoma, the wrestling currents run strong—and deep. This is the cradle of the national collegiate champions, the home of Oklahoma A & M's Wrestling Aggies, which is the name embossed upon the team's sweat shirts.

**17. TEEN AGE CITADEL.** Cued by the wrestling boom and the "ringside seat in your parlor" offered by television, the teen-agers living along the Long Island Sound have taken to grappling as they have to Sloppy Joe sweaters. One of the centers of high school enthusiasm for wrestling is Bellmore, L. I.

**18. NON-STOP FEVER.** Boston may be noted for its haddock, baked beans and broad "a" but it also has a unique spot in wrestling history, and for one big reason: Enthusiasm for wrestling in Boston has been at a consistently high level since World War I, without a stop.

**19. TURNER'S PLACE.** Wrestling is a complicated business, but there's one lady in Washington who knows all the angles. She's Frances Turner, one of the few lady promoters in the U.S.A. She got into it when her husband, Joe Turner, for whom the arena is named, died.

**20. THE OTHER MEDIUM.** Trenton, N. J., is a medium-sized industrial city and a classic example of wrestling enthusiasm at the grass-roots level. Here, fans tune in eagerly in considerable numbers to listen to radio reporting of Trenton bouts by Ernest Kovacs. Kovacs, at times, even takes down his radio eye-witness report on tape, and then re-broadcasts it on another night.

**21. WITHOUT TV.** Wrestling enthusiasm is at a fever pitch in St. Louis so much so that it even outdraws a major league ball club, the St. Louis Browns. This astounding fact is made all the more amazing by the revelation that no telecasting of wrestling bouts is permitted here. The fans just go to wrestling bouts. They like it, period.

**22. MOTOR CITY.** Though not exactly a glamour city in the wrestling circuit, Detroit—and its vast assemblage of work-toughened auto workers—are tremendously enthusiastic about wrestling. Next to the Detroit Tigers, and a pay raise, they appreciate a good, clean, but rough match, and for that, they'll make the turnstiles jingle.

**23. TAG TEAMS.** Two opponents are in the ring, and two men stand by waiting to go in. It's a rough, speedy style of wrestling that's going great in San Francisco. Object is to force tired opponent over to your partner's corner. Then you tag your "fresh" partner and he pins the tiring opponent.

**24. THE POST-WAR BOOM.** Nobody knows exactly what set off the wrestling revival; it seems to be a mixture of elements. One of the biggest factors however was the provocative northwestern tours of Primo Carnera. The Northwest—home of the lumber camps—went wild over Carnera and seemed to perk up the entire wrestling industry.

**25. NEW GOLD RUSH.** One of the most fervent towns for wrestling on the West Coast is unpublicized Ocean Park. Fans drive in hundreds of miles to see carefully matched bouts featuring California's top grapplers and importations from the East. The audience is a mixture of everybody—from the hot-rod set to pensioners.

# 8. WHO'S WHO IN WRESTLING

YOU WALK THROUGH the neighborhood and the sporting clubs' posters catch the eye. "Wrestling Tonight." Already, you've noticed the cards boldly staring out of barber shops, social clubs, bus terminals, the corner grocery. And right up there in the biggest type are emblazoned the names of the headliners. And headliners deserve it—for they earned it by fiery ring wizardry, and that secret of all sports—personality. They deserve the top billing—but underneath, listed in less lordly type, are other fine wrestlers. And the one striking fact concerning the wrestling boom in the U.S.A. is this: that there's a wealth of fine wrestling talent, whose maneuverability, agility and leverage are a joy to watch.

Wrestlers live a rough, migratory life. They're always on the move and often live with a railroad time table in their hands. Each time they enter the ring they know

they may go out on a stretcher. A flying charge, badly aimed, may thrust them right into the steel posts or out of the ring onto the concrete floor. They are always on trial with more than a thousand eyes watching their every movement. If they do a bad show their earning power may be decreased, since there is a delicate relationship between earnings and crowd-pleasing. They stop at hotels that don't cost them an arm and a leg and yet at hotels where they can get sufficient sleep and good substantial food. Not fancy food, but staples—eggs, milk, steaks.

The talent who precede the main event are the bone and sinew of the huge wrestling revival. From them come the bouts that have won wrestling so many loyal devotees. Here is a representative sample of that talent in picture and biographical form.



SPANISH STRONGMAN

**SPANISH STRONGMAN**—Polo Cordova was born in Madrid and resides in N.Y.C. Attended college in Spain—studied to be a doctor. He is 32, 6'1", 220 pounds and has been wrestling as a pro for 8 years. Polo is an all around athlete. His favorite hold is a full nelson.

**KIMAN KUDO**—Is 5'9", 190 lbs. and 42 years of age. He resides in Honolulu. During the war he worked in a defense plant and then taught judo to the army and navy. Has wrestled almost everybody. An all around athlete, Kiman wrestled a boxer whom he beat in the second round in 1936.

**CHIEF LITTLE WOLF**—He is a full blooded Navajo Indian. He has been wrestling for 14 years.

**LEO GARIBALDI**—Is just 20, 6'1". He won the junior heavyweight title of the world March 8, 1950. He was taught by his dad and wrestling partner, Gino Garibaldi.

**THE KANGAROO**—One of the better known wrestlers in the business today is the little 216 lb. product of Forest Hills, N. Y., Abe Coleman. In 1931 while on a tour of Australia, he studied the habits of the kangaroo. On his return to the States, he introduced the Kangaroo Drop Kick. He has wrestled almost everybody of note.

**COWBOY**—Is one of the fastest men on his feet in the ring. 240-lb. Pet Fratey, 5'10 1/2", has few peers as a dropkick artist. He was first to use the flying toehold as a finisher and also features the mule kick. He is from Blair, Nebraska, where he sang cowboy songs and really rode a horse. He still takes his guitar along with his mat bags when he goes on tour.



KIMAN KUDO

CHIEF LITTLE WOLF



LEO GARIBALDI

THE KANGAROO

COWBOY





BOB CORBY



CHIROPRACTIC KILLER



BOX OFFICE MARVEL



GORDON HESSEL



STEVE KARAS

**BOB CORBY**—170 lbs. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, Bob decided to turn pro in 1930. Wins the Southern Light Heavy belt and the Rocky Mountain crown. He features a reverse neck stretch, done while his opponent is on his knees. His hobbies are golf, bowling and ice skating.

**CHIROPRACTIC KILLER**—Red Kirkpatrick, 190+, 210-lb. Brooklyn boy is studying at the Chiropractic Institute in New York. Red, who just recently married, is one of the terms of the ring. His favorite hold is the short arm scissors. He played football at Erasmus High School and then at Tusculum College.

**BOX OFFICE MARVEL**—Lee Daniel Boone "Whiskers" Savage has performed enough prodigious feats of strength to make himself a living legend in the Southwest. From Kentucky, he throws his 225 pounds into "scuffling," as he calls it, with his opponent using his log rolling hold and bear hug. Texas fans regard him as one of the hardest men to beat in the mat game.

**GORDON HESSEL**—Now 34, this grapper has been in the ring since the age of 13 in Milwaukee, and started his professional career at the age of 16 under a nom de plume. In 1947 he was crowned Pacific Coast light heavy champ, but relinquished this as he outranked the division. He is now after the heavyweight crown. His favorite hold is a reverse flying head scissors.

**STEVE KARAS**—29, 5'9", 180 lbs., is married and has a daughter. Steve owns a string of hairdressing stores. During the war he was a pilot for the 12th air force. He has played some semi-pro baseball. Steve picked up his wrestling by watching the boys wrestle in the gyms.

**GEORGE BRUCKMAN**—35, 5'8", weighs 204. 11 years pro, 2 years amateur. Instructor with Dempsey in Coast Guard. When he got out he toured with U.S.O. camp show to the Philippines, North and South Japan. Wrestled in every state in Union. Sports are swimming, hiking, bike riding. Likes to dance. Prefers to wrestle out west because the men are his size and weight.

**"TARZAN"**—Tarzan Hawitt, President of Meanness, Inc. is 29, 6'1", and weighs 245 lbs. Tarz is a graduate of Toronto University. He was taught his wrestling by Irvin Harris, coach of the Toronto wrestling squad. Tarz or Frank played hockey for the Toronto Maple Leafs farm club before his three year stay in the Canadian Army. He owns the Golden Slipper Ballroom.

**LITTLE PUNJAB**—Martin Karadagian, the Little Armenian Argentinian, has been wrestling for 11 years. He is 5'7" and weighs 210 lbs. He is single. One of the toughest little men in the ring, Punjab takes them on—size no object—and gives them a good working over. He speaks 12 languages.

**ABE STEIN**—Is 5'9" and weighs 210 lbs. New York born, Abe wrestles throughout the country and makes his headquarters on the West Coast. He is one of the finest wrestlers to come out of New York City.

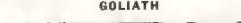
**GOLIATH**—The 6'3 1/2" dominating figure of Woody Strode has come from the gridiron of U.C.L.A. to wrestling prominence. He started his ring career in 1940; teamed up with Jim Mitchell for a go at the Coast tag-team title. He hopes later to go on to single glories. Woody strums a guitar in his spare moments.

**BROTHER FRANK JARES**—Frank's 5'10 1/2", 225-lb. body is a great aid for his hobby of teaching teenagers how to lift weights. He met Brother Jonathan, the Mormon Cruiser, when he lived in Provo, Utah; they teamed up in 1942 and toured America. Brother Jonathan has worked to make Frank a polished wrestler.

**GOLDEN BOY**—Hans Bob Hermann, German born, has been living in the U. S. for sixteen years. Bob stands 6'6", weighs 200 lbs. and is 27. He has an engineering degree from Tufts where he starred on the track and field team. During the war he was a major in the secret service. His favorite holds are the bear hug and step over toe hold.



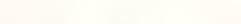
TARZAN



ABE STEIN



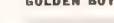
GOLIATH



BROTHER FRANK JARES



LITTLE PUNJAB



GOLDEN BOY





TONY MORELLI



CHESTER HAYES



KENNY ACKLER



TONY GALENTO



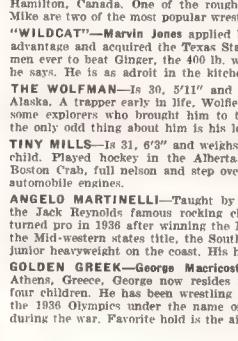
ARNOLD SKAALIND



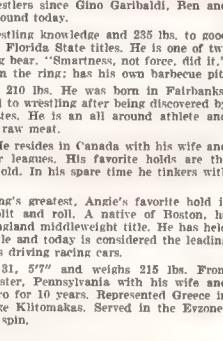
KARL DAVIS



BEN SHARPE



TINY MILLS



ANGELO MARTINELLI



MARVIN JONES



THE WOLFMAN



GOLDEN GREEK

**TONY MORELLI**—38, 5'8", 220 lbs., has been wrestling as a pro for sixteen years. He started wrestling at the age of thirteen at the New York (Bronx) Union "X." He is married and resides in California. He held the AAU, YMCA, and NYS amateur light-heavyweight championships. Held Florida and Hawaii pro light-heavyweight titles.

**FAN FAVORITE**—A pro wrestler for 14 years, Chester Hayes is a Black Belt man (legitimate champion). He held the Texas and California State light-heavyweight titles in 1938. One of the best athletes to come out of Texas, Chester frequently does stunt work in pictures. He is a U. S. Golden Gloves boxing champ, and was runner-up in the 1932 Olympic wrestling competition.

**KENNY ACKLES**—32, 5'11", 198 lbs., has been wrestling for 11 years. Resides in California. He was amateur heavyweight boxing champ in California. Has been on radio and television, and had bit parts on the stage. He has trained movie stars while a physical instructor for MGM.

**TWO-TONY TONY**—39-year-old Tony Galento, former fighter who was stopped by Joe Louis in 1938, is one of the toughest wrestlers around today. His favorite hold is a right cross to the chin. Tony is married and has children.

**ARNOLD SKAALIND**—Resides in Westchester, New York. He commands terrific respect throughout the country. He is 5'11" and weighs 205 pounds. Arnold possesses a tremendous library of dazzling holds.

**KARL DAVIS**—Former football, baseball, and basketball star at Ohio State is 38, 6'2", 240 lbs. and resides in Los Angeles, Calif. He was All-American fullback in 1927-28 while at Ohio State. Played for the St. Louis Cardinals. Had an 11-2 record but an injury ended his baseball career after his first season. Married, five children.

**BEN SHARPE**—The brother of Mike Sharpe, he weighs 245 lbs. and resides in Hamilton, Canada. One of the roughest wrestlers since Gino Garibaldi, Ben and Mike are two of the most popular wrestlers around today.

**"WILDCAT"**—Marvin Jones applied his wrestling knowledge and 235 lbs. to good advantage and acquired the Texas State and Florida State titles. He is one of two men ever to beat Ginger, the 400 lb. wrestling bear. "Smartness, not force, did it," he says. He is as adroit in the kitchen as in the ring; has his own barbecue pit.

**THE WOLFMAN**—Is 30, 5'11" and weighs 210 lbs. He was born in Fairbanks, Alaska. A trapper early in life, Wolfe turned to wrestling after being discovered by some explorers who brought him to the States. He is an all around athlete and the only odd thing about him is his love for raw meat.

**TINY MILLS**—Is 31, 6'3" and weighs 260. He resides in Canada with his wife and child. Played hockey in the Alberta Junior leagues. His favorite holds are the Boston Crab, full nelson and step over toe hold. In his spare time he tinkers with automobile engines.

**ANGELO MARTINELLI**—Taught by the ring's greatest, Angie's favorite hold is the Jack Reynolds famous rocking chair split and roll. A native of Boston, he turned pro in 1936 after winning the New England middleweight title. He has held the Mid-western states title, the Southern title and today is considered the leading junior heavyweight on the coast. His hobby is driving racing cars.

**GOLDEN GREEK**—George Macriconas is 31, 5'7" and weighs 215 lbs. From Athens, Greece. George now resides in Chester, Pennsylvania with his wife and four children. He has been wrestling as a pro for 10 years. Represented Greece in the 1936 Olympics under the name of George Klimonakas. Served in the Erzones during the war. Favorite hold is the airplane spin.



KING KONG



STEVE GOB



RUBE WRIGHT



FRANCOIS MIQUET



DICK TROUT



MIKE SHARPE



HARRY FINKELSTEIN



GRAPPLING GREEK



DON BLACKMAN



GEORGE FLYNN



JACK SINGER



THE LITTLE BIG BOY



JIM AUKEET



JIM AUKEET



ART BRADY



HANS STEINKE



THE KRIPPLER



ANGELO SAVOLDI



ALI BABA

**ART BRADY**—6'1", 220 lbs., resides in Huntington Park, Calif. Attended Compton Junior College and USC. Played football (guard). Played some football for the Los Angeles Bulldogs. Favorite hold is the pile driver. Has played in Joe Palooka pictures.

**HANS STEINKE**—He is 48, 6'3" and weighs 247 lbs. and resides in Chicago. He has been wrestling as a pro for more than 20 years. He is a master of all holds. His hobbies are golf and handball. The original German oak.

**THE KRIPPLER**—Hailing from Houston, Texas, Karl Davis learned to wrestle at Ohio State University. He has held the Texas, Pacific Coast and Mid-Western States titles. He has caused near riots almost the entire breadth of this continent. When he plays, it's for keeps; Pier Six style is his favorite mode of attack, the shoulder smash climaxing a series of brutal holds.

**ANGELO SAVOLDI**—Is 5'9" and weighs 220 lbs. He resides in Hoboken, New Jersey with his wife and two children. Has been wrestling as a pro for 16 years. An all around athlete, Angelo has met most of the wrestlers around today.

**ALI BABA**—Colorful figure from Turkey, who started his career in Boston. 200 lbs., 5'9". Ali's growth was stunted by starvation. He won a Major Bowes' contest, and won the championship by a body slam. His son, 6'2" and weighing 220 lbs., is a good outfielder.

**JACK STEELE**—Is 27 and weighs 210 lbs. He is married and resides in Newark, New Jersey. An all around athlete, Jack was a lifeguard before entering the Navy for a five year term. His favorite hold is the flying tackle. In his spare time he studies television.

**OKLAHOMA HAYRIDE**—A graduate of the University of San Francisco, where he played tackle on the football team, 5'11", 232 lbs., Joe Corbett is one of the strongest men most perfectly built wrestlers. Joe has wrestled all over the world including New Zealand and Australia. His favorite holds are the Oklahoma Hayride and the Irish Whip.

**SAM KOHEN**—5'8", 195 lbs., resides in Patterson, N. J. Before turning to wrestling he was a boxer. His favorite holds are the surfboard and the Japanese one leg toe hold.

**KINGSTON KILLER**—33-year-old Don Evans has been wrestling for sixteen years. Married and has a son. Resides in Kingston where he owns a farm. At one time a gentle wrestler, but a leg fracture at the hands of Ivan Manaskoff that laid him off for 16 months changed him into one of the roughest wrestlers in the game today. He is 6', 227 lbs.

**JOHN "DUTCH" SCHWEIGERT**—Is 6'1" and weighs 230. He attended the University of Tulsa, where he played football with All-America Glenn Dobbs. Dutch graduated with a Physical Education degree. He is married and has a daughter. They reside in Brooklyn.

**TOGO**—Is 5'8" and weighs 218 lbs. A graduate of the University of Oregon where he majored in Philosophy, Togo has been wrestling as a pro for 10 years. His favorite hold is the Japanese torture hold.

**MIQUEL TORRES**—Mexican born Miqueal resides in Los Angeles, California with his wife. An ex-bull fighter, Miqueal turned to wrestling after a serious accident in the arena that nearly cost him his life. He is 29, 5'11" and weighs 227 lbs. He has been wrestling as a pro for 8 years.



JACK STEELE



SAM KOHEN



OKLAHOMA HAYRIDE



KINGSTON KILLER



JOHN "DUTCH" SCHWEIGERT



TOGO



MIQUEL TORRES



GEORGE HARBEN



NATIE BROWN



HANS KAEMPFER



JESSE JAMES



BLACK PANTHER



IRISH JACK

**GEORGE HARBEN**—39, 6'1", 225 lbs. He is married and has four children. Started as a pro wrestler seventeen years ago in Texas. As an amateur he was Southern regional YMCA champ. Has mastered all holds during his career. He has just returned to the East Coast after an absence of thirteen years.

**NATIE BROWN**—The first boxer ever to go the distance with Joe Louis. Natie is 38, 6', 205 lbs and resides in Washington, D. C. He attended the University of Southern California, where he played football with Ross Sanders. Natie is married and has two children. The second time he fought Joe Louis the bout was stopped after 4 rounds because of bad cuts under his eyes.

**HANS KAEMPFER**—Is 38, 5'11", 232 lbs. He resides in New York City with his wife and child. He was Greco-Roman champ in Breslau, Germany, in 1931-3. He has wrestled all the old time greats. Rough and tough.

**JESSE JAMES**—The 30-year-old, 218-pound, 5'9" former artist has been wrestling for ten years. He is married and resides in Washington, D. C. He served for three years in the Navy. In addition to wrestling, he is in television set designing and commercial art.

**BLACK PANTHER**—Jim Mitchell is 5'9", 39, and weighs 220 lbs. Jim is a resident of Toledo, Ohio. His son is studying medicine at Ohio State. His favorite weapon is his head which he uses to great advantage.

**IRISH JACK**—Jack Kelly has been wrestling for seven years. The former Illinois fullback resides in St. Louis with his wife and daughter. An all around athlete, Jack shoots golf in the low 70's. He is 30, 5'11" and weighs 225.

## 9. PROMINENT MEN BEHIND THE WRESTLING SCENE

**UP IN BOSTON**—Paul Bowser, called by many in the trade as "wrestling's historian," often gives talks and lectures outlining the growth of wrestling as depicted in sculpture, literature, and the Bible. He is also top matchmaker at Boston's two foremost arenas—the Boston Arena and the Boston Gardens.

**EX-FARM BOY**—One of the biggest wheels in Canadian wrestling is bespectacled, mild-mannered Frank Tunney, an ex-farm boy from the tiny Canadian town of Markham. A distant relation to Gene Tunney, Frank Tunney is 36, married and the father of three children.

**FROM THE MAT**—Joe "Toots" Mondt knows wrestling from the mat to the marquee level. Highly placed in U. S. wrestling circles, Mondt was a former pupil of Farmer Burns. He enjoys good shows, music, and lives in Greenwich Village with his wife. He is a brilliant organizer and matchmaker.

PAUL BOWSER



FRANK TUNNEY



JOE "TOOTS" MONDT





ED DON GEORGE



FRED KOHLER



BILL JOHNSON

**TOP MAT IMPRESARIO**—Skeptics sighed and tapped their foreheads in a comical fashion when they heard that somebody was bringing wrestling back into the Madison Square Garden. Today, they're singing another tune, for Bill Johnson not only brought wrestling back to Madison Square Garden, but made it a resounding success. Johnson looms as the U. S. top mat impresario. He's canny, resourceful and has the vision to back up what he believes in—wrestling. This daring, brilliant promoter, by a keen grasp of popular psychology, is making wrestling history in the second half of the twentieth century.

**MIDWEST SCENE**—One of the men responsible for the healthy wrestling picture in the Midwest is Fred Kohler. Those headlining Kohler's shows are outstanding U. S. wrestlers including Walter Palmer, Cyclone Anoya, and Leroy McGurk.

**FORMER OLYMPIC STAR**—The former Olympics ace, Ed Don George, is making sports history with his fine wrestling shows and crowds in Buffalo and the surrounding upstate New York area.

## 10. THE FABULOUS DUSEKS

The "first family of wrestling" is, unmistakably, the fabulous Dusek clan (Rudy, Wally, Ernie, Emil, and Joe) and between them it is estimated that they earn upwards of \$100,000 a year. The "Riot Squad," as they are affectionately known, is probably the largest family ever dedicated so single-mindedly to one sport. There's hardly a night through the 365 days in a year that there isn't somewhere, some Dusek climbing through the ropes preparing to take on an opponent in the grand, brawling style that typifies the Duseks.

They're all tough and they wear the cauliflower ear as a badge of occupational courage. Since they spend so much time in indoor arenas, when they go home in Omaha, they put on hunting caps, and mackinaws and head for nearby hunting grounds. Besides hunting, they enjoy fishing. In fact, Joe Dusek sticks

pretty close to town, doubling as a commercial fisherman operating in the Missouri.

All live in Omaha, except Rudy Dusek, who's stationed on the East Coast to take care of the clan's wrestling interests. Rudy guides this aspect of the Dusek enterprises from a midtown Manhattan office. His home is a quarter-block mansion, in Trenton, New Jersey. He has a living room completely done in rare mahogany; it would do a baronial castle architectural honor.

Between the Duseks they have wrestled everybody of consequence—Ed "Strangler" Lewis, Joe Stecher, Ed Don George, Dick Shikat, Wayne Manne. Their scrap-books alone would cover half the Smithsonian Institute. All try to live up to the proud slogan attached to Rudy Dusek, "The wrestler who has never appeared in a dull match."



RUDY, WALLY, ERNIE AND EMIL

## 11. FAMOUS FEUDS

**GENE STANLEE VS. BUDDY ROGERS:** A simmering feud exists between these two, which erupts into violent action whenever they meet in the ring. Rogers charges Gene with stealing his style. Buddy claims that while he was under a two year suspension in New York, Stanlee copied his maneuvers and tricks and used them to build himself up in New York.

Gene laughs at the accusation, pointing to the thousands of voices claiming that he, Stanlee, had used his unique style even when wrestling in the Navy. Many, in fact, say that Gene is the originator, and charge Buddy with copying. The fierce battle between the two fan clubs is matched only by the exploding violence of a Stanlee-Rogers mat duel.

Of recent vintage has been the personality clash between Lord Leslie Carlton and the veteran ruffian Don Evans. It is well known that Don Evans, who is extremely good-natured, ranks as one of wrestling's pranksters. Carlton, by contrast, a serious and studious man, says that he takes exception to Evans' practical jokes, which he claims might often seriously endanger some poor victim. The first time these two men met, at Broadway Arena in New York City in 1949, so gory was their battle and so completely were both men bloodied at the end of some 25 minutes or so, that the match had to be ended by the officials in order to avoid mass hysteria among the patrons. One or two subsequent matches produced the same result.

One of present-day wrestling's famous feuds is the Tony Morelli-Antonino Rocca embroil. As best as can be figured out, Morelli, one of wrestling's top veterans for many years, is a very sensitive person. He claims that Rocca has gone big-headed since

becoming wrestling's top star. It could be that Morelli, who is a precocious sort, has never been able to understand Rocca, who is by nature quiet and dignified. These two men have never met in the ring, but outside the ring, their verbal clashes have often led to near fist fights, halted only by the interception of others in the dressing room. Meanwhile, Tony Morelli loudly pleads for a chance at Rocca . . . "In any arena, under any rules, for any or no purse."

The feud between Antone Leone and John Swenski, by contrast to the aforementioned, is based upon pure violence. In the course of a match between these two, John Swenski, employing his famous "giant swing," crashed Leone into one of the ring posts with such horrifying impact that Leone's shoulder muscles were torn to shreds, and his shoulder horribly dislocated. The finest medical attention has failed to completely repair that shoulder, and only Antone's great skill in keeping opponents away from that injured shoulder makes it possible for him to continue wrestling. But at such times when the injured shoulder was again dislocated in a match, anesthesia had to be administered at once in order to relieve the terrible pain, and to make setting possible.

Still running is the feud between the Temple University Terror, Billy Darnell, and Nature Boy Buddy Rogers. Their first gory match, in New York City in 1947, earned both of them two-year disqualifications from New York State rings. So hysterical were the patrons that four fainted and one spectator died of a heart attack at ringside. Oddly enough, this was based on nothing more than one man's desire to prove his superiority over the other.

## 12. WRESTLERS VS. FIGHTERS

"CAN A GOOD BOXER trounce a good wrestler?"

This question has raged for more than half a century, with many fans getting so excited that they've almost started "swinging debates." To many, the question appears to be hypothetical, something that can't be answered, since there are no records to point to. Yet in the past that debate exploded into dramatic matches within the ring.

Probably the most publicized example of the wrestler vs. boxer controversy was the encounter that witnessed Kingfish Levinsky square off against Ray Steele, the wrestler. It drew a capacity house, and the affair was interesting from the standpoint of strategy. Chicago's Kingfish, a fine light heavyweight, had been coached to hug the ropes. He was told to stay along the ropes with one arm clasping the rope and the other arm free. His strategists believed that by so doing Ray Steele couldn't kick Levinsky's feet from out under him. They thought that the wrestler would be completely bottled up and that if Steele came too close, Levinsky's left hook would send him to dreamland. But the strategy didn't work. Ray Steele, out of St. Louis, managed to separate Levinsky from the ropes, slam him around a few times, and pin him easily. There was nothing to it.

A similar boxer vs. wrestler contest took place many years ago in San Francisco's Dreamland Rink. It was encouraged and

whoopla'd by Warren Brown, then sports writer for the *San Francisco Call* and presently sports editor of the *Chicago Tribune*. The opponents were Louis Aspin, a fine Australian boxer, vs. Joe "Toots" Mondt. 4500 attended—it was a sellout. The bell rang and Mondt rushed to the middle of the ring. The fans gasped as Mondt playfully countered all of Aspin's frantic punching. Soon Mondt had Aspin down on the mat helpless. Out of a pocket in his trunks Mondt took out a silken bathroom cord. Quickly but easily he tied Aspin's hands and feet together. Aspin resembled a bulldogged steer waiting to be branded.

Then there is the private untold story of the meeting between Farmer Burns and Billy Papke. While Papke was training for the Johnston bout, he and Burns were prodded into a test. Could a good boxer, etc., etc. It was no contest. In a few minutes Burns, employing his fantastically effective leverage upon Papke's fingers and arms, had Papke pinned to the mat. Casually Burns took out a skipping rope and hog-tied the famous welterweight champion.

Jack Dempsey, who has been hearing the debate on boxers and wrestlers for more years than he cares to remember, never ducks this question when he is asked. Dempsey's reply? "A boxer hasn't got a chance. Wrestlers are much stronger."

## 13. TOP WRESTLING TELECASTERS AND REPORTERS

IN SUPER-CHARGED twentieth century sports coverage, the reporter pounding a typewriter is not the only important man. He's given a brilliant assist by a galaxy of keen-witted sports photographers, statisticians and cartoonists, without whose help sports coverage would be as thin as cafeteria farina. By virtue of collective research and long years in lonely laboratories, today there's something new in the history of sports reporting—the sports telecaster.

The sports telecaster brings to viewers material not implicit in the screened images sent by the iconoscope via the high-powered lenses. He fills in where the mute camera fails, with incisive comments on comparative statistics and strategy, and answers anticipated questions. In the present growth of wrestling, the influence of the telecasters—and even a few radio reporters—has been im-

mense. Male sports fans swear by them, and women who've followed them, are today as familiar with head scissors as they are with permanent waves. In Chicago, the Far West, St. Louis, the Southwest, there are wrestling telecasters, who have attracted huge audiences by their crisp, down to earth coverage.

While saluting America's top wrestling telecasters and reporters, it would be amiss not to mention some others who have done a creditable job in an extremely difficult field. Deserving recognition for their fine, skilled analysis of wrestlers and wrestling are Tom Morehead (Philadelphia); Bill Mazur (Buffalo); Jack Brickhouse (Chicago); and Fred Sayles (New Jersey).

And now the regional reports of the wrestling scene throughout the country by America's top wrestling reporters.



HARRY CARAY



BILL JOHNSON, JR.



DICK LANE



WAYNE GRIFFIN



DON DUMPHY



DENNIS JAMES



JIM GIBBONS



SAM TAUB

**IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL:** One of the men who has helped jog the wrestling boom and attract the Washington élite to Joe Turner's Auditorium is popular JIM GIBBONS who telecasts over WMAL and the ABC Eastern Television Network. In addition to wrestling coverage, Gibbons has described hockey, basketball, baseball and track. His wrestling telecasting, however, is outstanding.

**WAY BACK:** Radio back in the early 1930's made fumbling attempts to report wrestling. One of the first in the field of wrestling reporting was Don Dumphy, then working with WBNX. Dumphy recalls that most of the bouts would end with three flying tackles and an airplane spin winding up the evening with a flourish. Presently, Don Dumphy is a top-flight sportscaster with A.B.C.

**POPULAR NEW YORK TELECASTER:** Helping to cover the multi-million-dollar wrestling scene in New York is Bill Johnson, Jr. His hold-by-hold commentary of wrestling bouts is heard over CBS-TV. He is extremely capable and well-liked. Reporting from the Midwest is WAYNE GRIFFIN who has built up a huge television reputation through his skilled reporting over ABC-TV. Headquartered in Chicago, his wrestling telecasts are heard throughout the East as well, since he's picked up by the co-axial cable.

**TAUB, THE PIONEER:** When everybody mocked television and flung cracks about the streakiness that often overcame the home screen, it needed courage to stick at a job, hardly appreciated. Starting in those days when television was only a rumor was Sam Taub. Famous coast to coast, Taub pioneered in sportscasting over TV. He was one of the first to wrestling telecasting techniques over WNBT.

**RADIO REPORTER:** Probably a prize for the toughest job well done of wrestling reporting ought to go to young, personable Harry Caray, top St. Louis sportscaster. St. Louis arenas as yet doesn't permit telecasting of bouts so Caray does the next thing—covering them with the spoken word.

**HIGHLY REGARDED MR. JAMES:** One of the pioneer telecasters eyeing the New York wrestling scene is 31-year-old Dennis James. James coveted the idea of having a career in medicine. But he decided, during the 1930's, that putting eight long years in studying was too much of a gamble. So he turned to radio and then to TV. He's currently heard over Dumont's WABD.

**WEST COAST'S DICK LANE:** One of the most popular West Coast sportscasters is also one of Hollywood's hardest working personalities—Richard "Dick" Lane. He usually enacts the role of glib press agents or agents who are always working on a "big deal." Since 1937, he has acted in close to three hundred films. Some of his recent film efforts include "The Big Wheel," "Quicksand," "The Jackie Robinson Story."

# 14. WEST COAST WRESTLING SCENE

by Dick Lane

IN THE FALL of 1947 our station KTLA started televising wrestling matches from the Olympic Auditorium in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. At that time wrestling was in the doldrums, as it was in most areas in the United States. We had a good television signal over a wide area in Southern California. We were fortunate in creating such a widespread interest in wrestling that attendance started to build. By the tenth week attendance had reached capacity and stayed that way for several months.

The popularity of wrestling on television caused other television stations to follow suit from other arenas, until four stations were telecasting matches in this area and business started to fall off. Early in 1950 the wrestlers became alarmed at the falling box office and they went on a television strike and refused to wrestle in any arena where their bouts were televised.

They received thousands of letters from irate fans demanding in some instances that their favorite sport return to television. At this moment we are in negotiations to resume telecasting in some form from some arena in this area, but no definite agreements have been reached.

Southern California wrestling fans seem to take a great fancy to the tag-team type of wrestling for their excitement, but generally preferred is the clean pressure and leverage type of wrestling. The popular wrestlers here are ARGENTINE ROCCO, DAVE LEVIN, ENRIQUE TORRES, GINO AND LEO GARIBALDI, BARON MICHELE LEONE, LORD BLEARS, GORGEOUS GEORGE, MORRIS SHAPIRO, DANNY McSHAIN, BILLY VARGA, BECKER BROS. and JIM MITCHELL.

Unusual interest is shown in combination judo and catch-as-catch-can matches wherein a coin is flipped, which type wrestling is to be used. The two out of three falls, one hour time limit match seems to be the popular main event. Television fans prefer a straight, honest description of the competitive aspects of wrestling rather than the exhibitive or hippodrome point-out comedy and are very rabid in their likes and dislikes.

The fan mail from wrestling fans runs about 1,500 a month and since wrestling has been off television, we have been given at least one hundred different suggestions on how to get it back permanently. Many offered to pay weekly or monthly sums to insure re-

ception of this popular sport. However, since the television stations cannot charge admission to any of their television events, most of these are impractical.

I am personally grateful to the wrestling fraternity and to Southern California promoters for four years of pleasant association and hope that we may very soon resolve the differences we now have and resume telecasting of wrestling—my favorite sport.

## COAST'S TOP MATMEN

**Gorgeous George**

**Danny McShain**

**Lord Carlton**

**Mike Mazurki**

**Billy Varga**

**Terry McGinnis**

**Gino Garibaldi**

**Baron Leone**

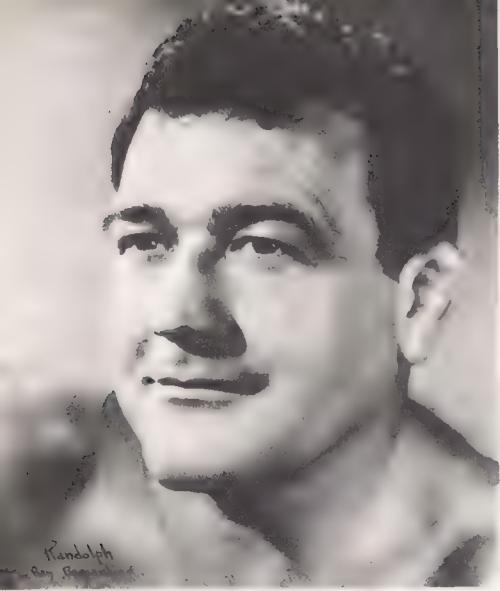
**Enrique Torres**

**Morris Shapiro**

*See Chapter Two for Other  
Photos and Biographies*



GINO GARIBALDI, 41 years old, has 20 years pro wrestling behind him. Gino has held the New England, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast titles, and is one of the few men to score a fall over Jim Londos.



**STRONG ARM MAYOR**—Terry McGinnis, a giant of a man, has been wrestling 17 years. Coming out of the Buckeye State, he became the honorary mayor of Westchester in 15 years. He won the Pacific Coast title in 1937, '38, '39 and '40. Terry spends most of his off-duty hours with boys. His hobby is model trains. Married; three children.



**ENRIQUE TORRES**



**LORD CARLTON AND VALET**

**TOP GRAPPLER**—Hardy, youthful Morris Shapiro is outstanding among the West Coast wrestling fraternity. California matchmakers can count on him for fast, hustling offensive matwork. He's always acquiring new ring tricks.



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**THE SMILER**—Baron Michele Leone, 5'9", claims to be the only real member of nobility of old Europe to wrestle. His uncle, who had been feted by Maharajahs copied their wrestling stables in Italy. That's how little Mike became indoctrinated. He turned pro nine years ago, toured Italy, France, England, South America, Canada, and is now in the U. S. His hair is long by tradition, he says. "He's rough," says the grappling world.

# 15. WRESTLING IN ST. LOUIS

by Harry Caray

THE SO-CALLED conservative St. Louis sports fans who have taken many undeserved jibes in years past must be pardoned for wondering what all the shooting is about relative to wrestling's new-found popularity the country over. You see this has been going on here for years. In a city where American league baseball finds it impossible to average as much as 4000 paid admissions per game, it has supported wrestling even through the summer months at an 8000 per show average. The St. Louis sports fan is a most discriminating species; his million plus support of the Cardinals in relation to the Browns' slim pickings is merely one illustration. His constant allegiance to wrestling week in and week out is another. Perhaps nowhere else in the country is the paradox of wrestling appeal better illustrated. In other cities the present resurgence of wrestling is attributed to the appeal created by television, but in St. Louis, where wrestling has been prospering for so many years, television isn't permitted and newspaper publicity is nil. Radio in St. Louis happens to be the game's only publicity medium but the way things have been going, the momentum being of such standing, they probably would still pack the 10,000 capacity Kiel auditorium even if radio joined television and newspaper in its silent treatment.

A few years ago here, Tom Packs, who had promoted wrestling into a lucrative state, sold out his interests to the Mississippi Valley sports club headed by Martin Thesz, father of the man thought by many to be the best actual wrestler in the game, Lou Thesz. During Packs' final years he had been waging a rather bitter promotional battle with a former protege, Sam Muchnick. With the advent of the Mississippi Valley sports club a friendly arrangement between the two promotional factions was worked out with an interchanging use of talent the most important result. It would be difficult to write about St. Louis wrestling without mentioning the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde box-office magnet who has drawn so many large gates. I refer to Wild Bill Longson, no longer even so much as a claimant to the intangible wrestling title but still the city's most popular

drawing card and most hated villain. Lou Thesz, Don Eagle, the perennial Duseks, Buddy Rogers, Whipper Billy Watson all have their followings, and as a thought-of-the-moment, it occurs that St. Louis' banner attendance has been without some of the hippodrome allowed elsewhere. For example, women wrestling if permitted here would establish without question all-time attendance records. It is no secret that wrestling, considered a step-child locally by the press, is also reluctantly accepted by the local state athletic commissioner who prefers to be known as a "boxing" man. So you see why I referred above to the "paradox" of wrestling's appeal in St. Louis. For years now the game has had two strikes as it were, the only press to speak of has been one of maligning and yet it continues to grow and grow and grow! Like some wag said the other day in indignation, "Wrestling, bah, the only ones who like wrestling are people!" And in St. Louis that's the story, a story not like in other sections of recent development but one of years standing. The discriminating St. Louis fan, known for his tempered judgment before paying at the gate, took it in fullheartedly long ago. Every Friday night here is wrestling night. The ringsiders are usually the same, the gathering an amazing collection of the haves and the have not's, but there they are in astonishing numbers, an average over the past six years that I have been in St. Louis of something like 8000 per show.

Incidentally, a few months ago a match was arranged in St. Louis between the two men claiming the world's title, Lou Thesz and Orville Brown. Tickets at a top of \$10 were printed and even before the match had been officially made, both promotional factions had received several thousands of dollars of orders. It was conservatively estimated by both promoters that this bout would have grossed a minimum of \$30,000 but Brown was seriously injured in an automobile accident and the bout was never staged. At any rate, wrestling here in St. Louis for years has been really big business, and instead of abating, the interest continues at a steady keel.

## OUTSTANDING WRESTLERS IN ST. LOUIS

**Lou Thesz**

**Whipper Billy Watson**

**Don Eagle**

**Buddy Rogers**

**Ernie Dusek**

**Wally Dusek**

**Rudy Dusek**

**Wild Bill Longson**

See Chapter Two for Other  
Photos and Biographies



**WILD BILL**—A popular Midwestern favorite, Wild Bill Longson started wrestling in the community centers of Salt Lake City. Member of the Mormon religious sect. He has fought the top—Whipper Billy Watson, Thesz, etc. Nickname derived from his driving, flying attack strategy.

**RIOT SQUAD RUDY**—A product of the famous Riot Squad, Rudy Dusek was born in Omaha, Nebraska. He is 5'10" and weighs 225. He resides in Passaic, N. J., where he owns a rambling type home.



**WALLY DUSEK**—Another of the "Riot Squad" Duseks, 5'11". Fighting weight, 227. Taught flying during the war. Owns private airport at Kirksville, Mo. Chief hold is the Airplane Spin.



**EMIL DUSEK**—5'10". Fighting weight, 228. A great hunter and fisherman, catches many coyotes, raccoons, ducks. All-around knowledge of Graeco-Roman and catch-as-catch-can styles.



# 16. WRESTLING IN THE SOUTHWEST

WRESTLING IS Texas' best indoor sport and has been holding leading position for a number of years. Leading box office city is Houston, the largest city in Texas, and coming up close, both in wrestling attendance and population, is Dallas. Fort Worth is third and San Antonio fourth but these two are very close.

Other cities and towns in east Texas that support the sport and do it well are Galveston, Corpus Christi, Waco, Austin, Longview, Gainesville, Beaumont, Orange, Victoria and Kingsville.

Of the leading cities, Fort Worth runs on Monday and does televisie; Dallas on Tuesday and televisies; San Antonio on Wednesday and televisies; Galveston on Thursday and there is no station there; Houston on Friday and they televisie.

In Texas the main events of wrestling programs are not televised but prelims are.

Ten leading wrestlers in our area: Danny McShane, Black Guzman, Rito Romero, Wild Red Berry, Sonny Myers, Timmy Geohagen, Al Lovelock, Leo Newman, Ruffy Silverstein, Vern Gagne.

Other popular wrestlers who come to

Texas are Wild Bill Longson, Leroy McGuirk, Lou Thesz.

Texas recognizes Lou Thesz of St. Louis, who is the NWA champion, as champion of the world and is ready and anxious to affiliate with anyone in the country who is out to promote the good of the sport. Leroy McGuirk of Tulsa, Oklahoma is the junior heavyweight champion and is also recognized by the NWA.

The Texas state title is a regional title and is not to be confused with any claims that might cloud the world title picture. It strictly denotes the championship of the Lone Star State and nothing else. It is the most bitterly contested prize in the wrestling world.

Promoter Morris Sigel of Houston recently put up a beautiful trophy symbolizing the tag team match championship of the state. It was won initially by Black Guzman and Rito Romero, an All Mexican team.

The leading wrestlers are also the most consistent winners.

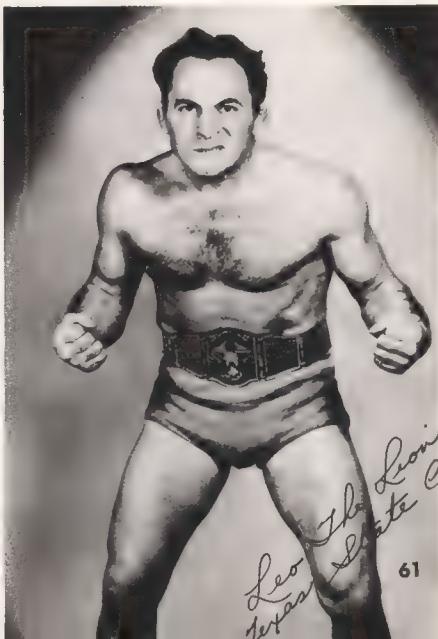
Vern Gagne, Olympic star, is the most promising youngster we have seen in Texas in many years. He is also National AAU champ.

## TOP WRESTLERS IN THE SOUTHWEST

**Lou Thesz**  
**Danny McShane**  
**Ruffy Silverstein**  
**Vern Gagne**  
**Miguel "Black" Guzman**  
**Leo (The Lion) Newman**  
**Sonny Meyer**

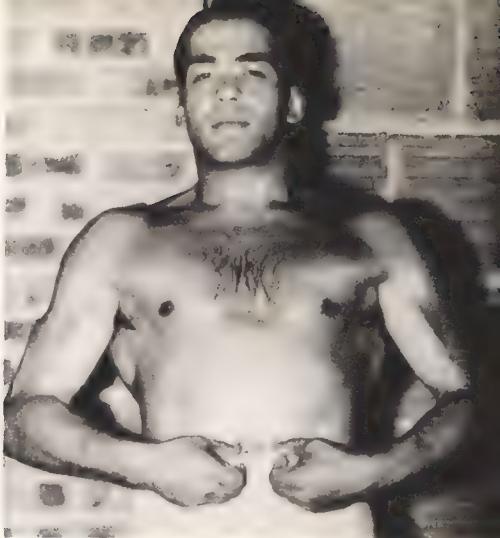
See Chapters Two and Five for  
Other Photos and Biographies

**LEO (THE LION) NEWMAN**—Leo Newman is a rough-and-tumble wrestler with iron nerves. He is a native of Kimmswick, Missouri, where he astonished his town folks by adopting a lion cub, which he later offered to the St. Louis zoo. He enters the ring at 198.





**VERNE GAGNE**—Gagne, pronounced "Gonya," is used to rough-house sports, for he was one of the sturdy members of Minnesota's Golden Gophers in the years when they rode roughshod over almost every team. This top mat star from the Southwest has spent long hours perfecting his holds. He was born in Minneapolis, and weighs 205.



**MEXICAN WRESTLING ACE**—Mexico is a hot wrestling center and sometimes the crowds are so large that they run wrestling bouts in outdoor bull-rings. Consequently, they have developed a raft of mat stars, including Miguel "Black" Guzman. He has been wrestling for eight years during which time he captured the Mexican junior heavyweight title and then the Texas State title. Weight 195.

**SONNY MEYERS**—Sports writers have tagged Sonny "Mr. Texas" Meyers as the coming mat sensation. This St. Joseph, Mo. wrestler is getting better all the time. Recently, he astonished the Kansas wrestling community by holding the formidable Orville Brown to a two hour and ten minute draw. Sonny's fighting weight is 218.



# 17. CHICAGO WRESTLING SCENE

by Wayne Griffin

WRESTLING is probably the world's oldest organized sporting endeavor. And, in America, especially here in the heart of the country, grappling, since the frontier days when Abe Lincoln was border champion, has had many rabid followers.

But professional wrestling began to die out with the departure of Jimmy London and Ed "Strangler" Lewis. Just prior to the Second World War, promoters couldn't give away enough 25 cent tickets to fill the empty arenas.

Television changed all that. Fred Kohler, Chicago's biggest wrestling impresario, and probably the most powerful match maker in the Midwest, credits the sport's comeback to a great extent to video. And now there are more television wrestling fans in this area than ever before. In Chicago alone, four separate cards are televised every week.

Attendance records are shattered every week. From small clubs the promoters moved into neighborhood arenas like Rainbo and Marigold, and then into the International Amphitheater, where Grand Champion Livestock Shows are held every year. And still the audiences grew, until recently the Chicago Stadium, the world's largest indoor arena, was the scene of a series of super bouts. It is probably only a matter of time until summer matches will be held at Soldier Field.

Says Kohler, "Before TV, we were playing to the mice. Since they moved those cameras in, the mice have to watch the show through knot-holes." And Promoters Ray Fabiani, Leonard Schwartz and Carl Schaller are in hearty agreement.

Rainbo Arena, where we originate our ABC-TV wrestling shows, was originally built as a jai alai fronton. Jai alai is that South American game they play with baskets and hard rubber balls. A fronton is the court they play on. Jai alai went over like a busted balloon in Chicago, and the place lay dormant until Fred Kohler began to promote wrestling matches there every Wednesday night. His Northside crowds just about broke the place even—that is, until ABC-TV started to carry the shows on TV in November, 1949. Since then, Rainbo matches have always been in the black. The first of this year, Rainbo was taken over by Leonard Schwartz and Carl Schaller. Schaller and Schwartz, through their nation-wide wrestling connections intend to provide the world's best wrestling to Rainbo patrons, and of course we will carry the matches over all 15 of our interconnected American Broadcasting Company television stations. In fact, plans

are in the making for kinerecordings of the bouts for delayed transmission over ABC-TV stations not yet reached by the coaxial cable.

I've been asked many times, by men in the business, by advertisers "Just what do your audiences like . . . in the way of wrestling, we mean . . . why is a sport that was apparently dead a few years ago such an attraction today on television?"

There are two good reasons. First, the fans like fast, clean wrestling. Of course, the clown still has his place in the ring, but primarily, viewers want to see quick action, and more science than dirty work. In the second place, here in Chicago, especially, the tight supervision by the Illinois State Athletic Commission has made the wrestlers stay on their toes. Here, wrestling is still a sport . . . not a circus. Chairman Joe Triner and his associates, including wrestling supervisor, Lou Gordon, are determined to keep it that way.

From our own mail, I know that by-and-large, the fans like clean wrestling. And that's the way I like it, too. I've continually fought to have the bouts appearing on our shows those including clean, scientific wrestlers. And I think we're winning, too. The clean, scientific wrestlers have relegated the clowns to supporting roles. Good showmanship demands that you mix it up. You see good wrestling in an inter-collegiate series, but the lack of variety makes the show mighty dull. So, we have team-matches, like the Australian Tag. These duels have their funny moments . . . and plenty of good wrestling, too.

There are still "heroes" and "villains" in the wrestling ring. But no more than there are "favorites" and "underdogs" on the football field. People are going to take sides in any conflict. The process of matching wrestling "heroes" against "villains" makes it easier for them.

I suppose a lot of people wonder if we sportscasters are really interested in the event we're calling . . . or if we're just doing a job. Sorry, but I can't speak for any of the other boys, but I can tell you I LIKE WRESTLING. If someone weren't paying me to call the matches . . . I'd pay my own way . . . and be right there in the front row. I get genuine enjoyment out of the sport.

I'll mention a few of the stars who make the matches so much pleasure for me. There are others, but space limitations hold this piece down. I think I agree with most of the people who've written in, that Chief Don Eagle is probably the best all-around wrestler in the

Midwest right now. But men like Lou Thesz, the recognized world's champion, The Great Balbo, Walter Plamer, Billy Goelz, and Billy Hickson, all hard-working, scientific grapplers are doing fine work.

I get a terrific kick out of Bouncing Benito Gardini, who incidentally as well as being the funniest man in the ring today, is an excellent journeyman wrestler.

For those of you who wonder if the "villains"

are on the level, let me just say that the Schnable Brothers, Hans and Fritz, are the roughest boys I've ever seen anywhere. They can inflict more mayhem on opponents in ten minutes, than most of the toughies can do in a month.

Right now, Chicago and the Midwest, like the rest of the country, are riding the crest of a wrestling boom. But I sincerely believe the sport's popularity will continue here . . . and anywhere . . . everywhere that television goes.

## CHICAGO'S TOP MATMEN

**Don Eagle**  
**Cyclone Anaya**  
**Leroy McGuirk**  
**Bobby Bruns**  
**Frank Talaber**  
**Frank Sexton**  
**Ruffy Silverstein**  
**Walter Palmer**  
**Billy Goelz**  
**Wild Bill Longson**

*See Chapters Two and Five for  
Other Photos and Biographies*

### WALTER PALMER

A casual stroll past the field house of Crane College, a Midwestern University, had extraordinary influence upon the career of Walter Palmer. As he puts it, "I walked into the Hamilton Field House one afternoon and saw a crowd of fellows wrestling. They were being taught under the guidance of Lou Talaber, the one-time middleweight king." Walter decided to join the mat class. Through hard work, devotion to training, and long years of conditioning Walter Palmer

has catapulted to the top of U. S. wrestling ranks. He is a fanatic on the importance of road work in the building up of a wrestler. "You crumple easily without roadwork." Some of his toughest matches have been with Ruffy Silverstein, the Swedish Angel, Kola Kwariani, and Hans Schnabel. Married, he is the father of two daughters. Most powerful offensive weapon is the crushing and dangerous spinning leg-hold.

*Picture of Walter Palmer unavailable*

# 18. WRESTLING IN NEW ENGLAND

## An Interview with Paul Bowser Historian of Wrestling

**Biographical note:** Few know as much concerning wrestling in New England than kindly, white-haired Paul Bowser, known in Boston sporting circles as "Papa Bowser." For nearly a quarter of a century, he has put on shrewdly-matched cards at the Boston Gardens and the Arena, that have been both crowd-pleasers and money-makers. Though not a telecaster, Bowser speaks with authority. The report is in question and answer form, and the only editing has been for continuity.

LE BOW: What is the wrestling picture in Boston? Has there been a recent boom?

BOWSER: No, it has not been recent. I have been here since right after World War I, and I built up gates from 300 or 400 people in the Grand Opera House until I had some gigantic houses. In fact we had one gate in which 52,000 paid admission. That was between Ed Don George and Dano O'Mahoney.

LE BOW: What about the fans?

BOWSER: Our audience is a cross-section. We get a lot of very high class people. We have judges, big doctors, and some of the best citizens in Massachusetts go to matches.

LE BOW: Where do you have your wrestling bouts?

BOWSER: I promote at the Boston Arena in Boston. Since the Coconut Grove disaster they have cut our capacity down to 8,000. The Garden was cut down to 14,000. It was exactly the same size as Madison Square Garden. We had 50 or 100 more seats in it but they have cut it down. I usually hold the bouts on Thursday nights.

LE BOW: What changes have there been in the wrestling scene in the past few years?

BOWSER: I think there is a new era coming on, and the scene has shifted. There used to be wrestlers who would go along and tug and pull and tussle. Now the emphasis is on the flying tackle and offensive stuff like that. Consequently wrestling has become more spectacular in the same way that football did after it opened up. Then, too, the old fans have passed away. During the war the old styles went out and a new type of wrestling came in. It helped in the "get tough" program given the boys in defense in hand-to-hand combat. Some of the new stars have come along and also interested the women. I would say women comprise at least 40% of our attendance.

LE BOW: So you think the war had a terrific impact upon wrestling?

BOWSER: About the army—remember this. Practically every wrestler has remarked about

the fact that he wrestled in the Navy or Army. Now I recall that a lot of promoters, for example, have been trying to get soccer across for a long time, and it was hoped that because of the role soccer played in the Army—for instance our boys saw great soccer games in Scotland, in England, and in India—they thought soccer would get the play that apparently was reborn in wrestling only. Wrestling was the only sport that I believe benefited from the extra impetus given by the Army and the "get tough" program that followed.

LE BOW: Do you get a lot of straight wrestling?

BOWSER: Yes. The people don't care for punching and racing around, and I don't care for it myself.

LE BOW: Do you get much of a younger element at the bouts?

BOWSER: I should say so. When the schools are out you will get 2,000 or 3,000 school kids and they are wild for it.

LE BOW: What do you think that is an indication of?

BOWSER: This reaction is without television. It is an indication of the youngsters' enthusiasm. I get hundreds of letters from boys asking me how they can become wrestlers; how they can get into the game. Some of them want to make a profession of it, but others want to go into it because they would like to get the experience and they think it is a good muscle developer, and personally I encourage them because I think that wrestling is a help to them, and I do not care what kind of business a boy goes into after he has been a wrestler. He has absolute confidence in himself after that and he has a background and a courage that will help him more than he can buy for a million dollars.

LE BOW: You were pretty close to and knew "Strangler" Lewis pretty well. What was the secret of "Strangler's" greatness?

BOWSER: Wrestling never worried him. He ate well and slept well and he had utmost confidence in his own ability. He had a marvelous physique. He was a long distance fellow—could go a long time. He was absolutely 100% game. And he had a sway back. It swayed a little, and where a fellow would try to grab him by the legs and get him he would just miss by an inch or a half inch. His rump was back about six inches more than the ordinary fellow's is.

LE BOW: Who were the six big attractions in your area in the last few years?

**BOWSER:** 1. Frank Sexton and Steve Casey. These were Arena shows. None were Garden shows. They drew around \$15,000 to \$20,000, as I can remember it.

2. Then there was Frank Sexton and Fred Von Schacht. About the same, but in the Garden. \$22,000—that was about capacity.

3. Sandor Zabo vs. Frank Sexton. That was an \$18,000 gate.

4. Casey and Zabo. Drew about the same.

5. Marvin Westenberg (The Shadow) vs. Steve Casey. That drew around \$21,000.

6. Yvon Robert and Dano O'Mahoney. That was a Garden show, and we had a \$3 top that drew \$48,000.

## TOP WRESTLERS IN NEW ENGLAND

**Frank Sexton**

**Steve Casey**

**Jim Casey**

**Steve Stanlee**

**Frederick Von Schact**

**Marvin Westenberg**

**Jim "Goon" Henry**



**STEVE STANLEE**—6 feet tall, 230 pounds, brother of the fabulous Gene Stanlee. He's single. Steve is stylish, tricky, rated stronger than Gene. One of the best-dressed young men in the business.



**FREDERICK VON SCHACT**—"The man with the perpetual sneer" is 6'6" and weighs 250 lbs. After winning the German heavyweight championship, he came to the U. S. and settled down in Milwaukee. An all around athlete, Frederick played on many outstanding soccer teams in Germany.



**GREEN HORNET**—Jim "Goon" Henry, the 260 lb., 6'4" Oklahomite, played football for Tulsa. Served in the Air Force. Played pro football before turning to wrestling. Favorite holds are back breaker and drop kick.



**MIKE CLANCY**—28 years old, 5'8½" tall, 210 pounds. Wrestling pro for twelve years. Sturdy and fast. Clean and popular. Features terrific Irish Whip and flying tackle. Played pro football and was in Coast Guard for three years.

**STEVE CASEY**—Merely one of the three athletic brothers of the fabulous Casey clan. Speedy, fast, aggressive, he once copped the world's heavyweight title.





JIM CASEY—Jim's career extends from Texas and California to Boston. He has a unique all-male family—12 brothers. Back in Ireland, he and three of the brothers won the rowboat championship of the world. One of the best grapplers in the New England area. Weight, 240. He stands 6 feet.



MARVIN WESTENBERG—A native of Tacoma, Washington. Wrestling enthusiasts may recall his fine grappling skill when he grappled under the name of the "Masked Black Secret." At one time, he won the world's heavyweight championship title. He tips the scales at 260, and is 6 feet 2.

## 19. TOP WRESTLERS IN TORONTO

**Whipper Billy Watson**

**Fred Atkins**

**Frank Sexton**

**Lou Thesz**

**Yukon Eric**

**Ski High Lee**

**Nanjo Singh**

**Bob "Strangler" Wagner**

**Al "Crusher" Korman**

See Chapter Two for Other

Photos and Biographies

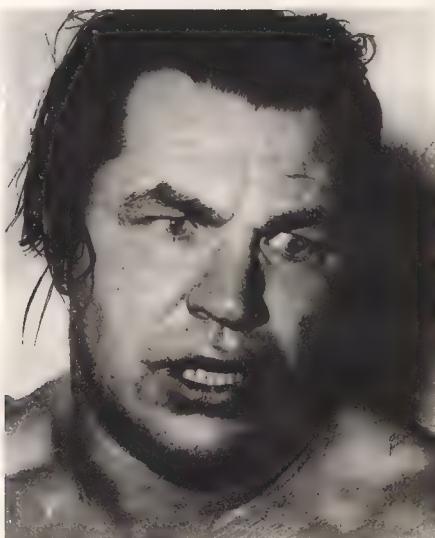
**MOST IMPROVED WRESTLER**—Canadian wrestling cognoscenti consider Al "Crusher" Korman to be the most improved wrestler on the current mat scene. A former boxer, he is one of the tallest grapplers. Those who have seen this trencherman at work say that he's certainly one of the greatest eaters. His birthplace, Nebraska.



**UP THERE**—Aggressive, always on the move is Ski High Lee, one of Canada's top crowd-pleasers. He manages to do three things at once. Not only does he keep up with his wrestling career but he also owns a farm and runs a large restaurant in Toronto. He tips the scales at 221. He stands 6'9".



ERIC HOLMBECK (YUKON ERIC)—Is 6' and 250 lbs. A resident of Fairbanks, Alaska, Erick attended Washington State where he played guard. He has been wrestling as a pro for 6 years. His father is in the trapping business. Erick's favorite hold is the headlock.

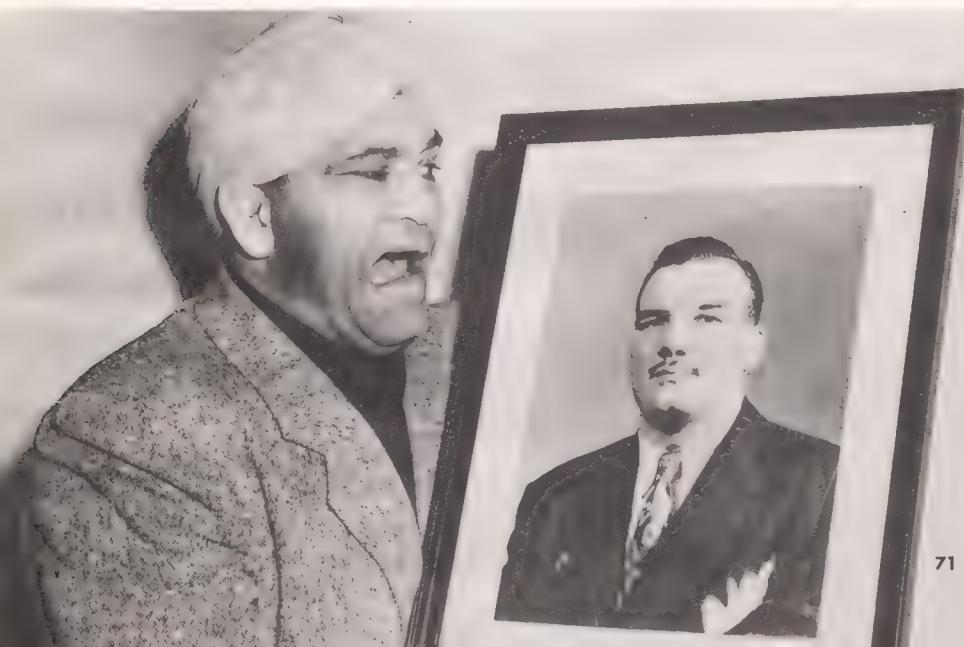


TOP DRAW—Bob "Strangler" Wagner plays it rough. He is an outstanding box office draw and he has broken many attendance records for gate receipts. He is a transplanted Canadian, originally coming from Oregon. His best weight entering the ring is 235. He is 5'10".



FRED ATKINS—The former Australian wrestling champion, Fred Atkins has a mat style that resembles Gino Garibaldi. His attack features terrific forearm smashes. He is married, and likes to enjoy life. He is a great lover of mongrel dogs, the uglier the better. His fighting weight is 240 and he stands 6 feet.

NANJO SINGH—Is 34, 5'9" and weighs 225 lbs. He is a full blooded Indian. He is the originator of the Cobra Clutch. He has been wrestling for 10 years. His hobbies are hunting and swimming.



# 20. MONTREAL'S OUTSTANDING WRESTLERS

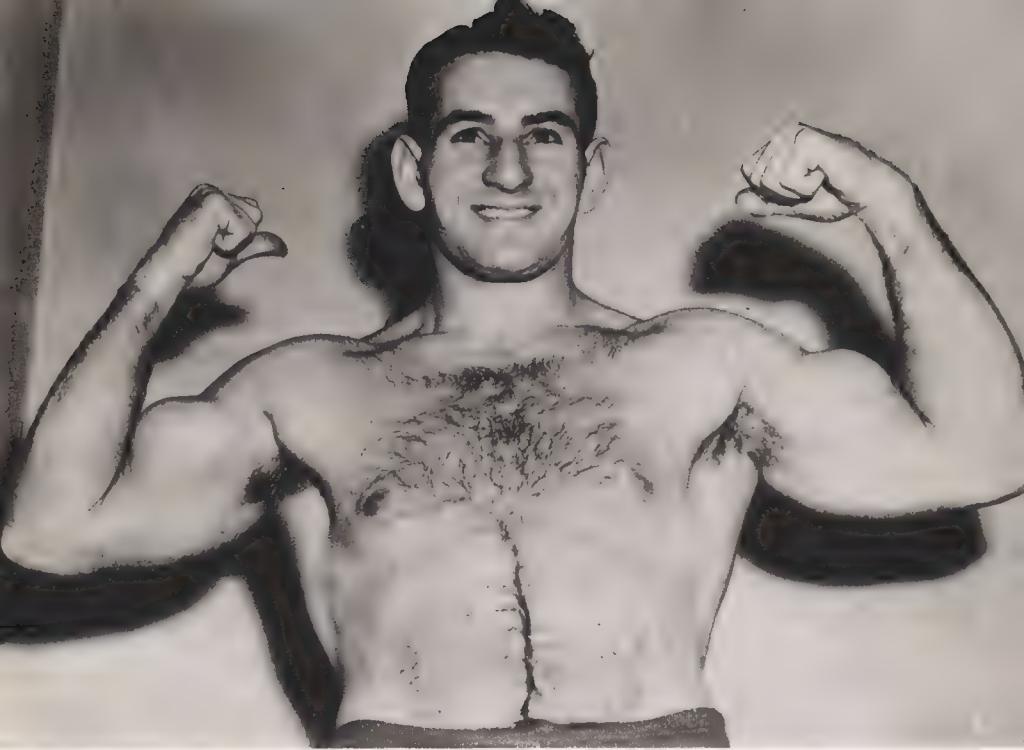
**Yvon Robert**  
**Whipper Billy Watson**  
**Ski High Lee**  
**Lou Thesz**  
**Fred Atkins**  
**Bobby Managoff**  
**Enrique Torres**  
**Don Eagle**  
**Wild Bill Longson**  
**Yukon Eric**  
**Mickey Gold**  
**Larry Moquin**

*See Chapter Two for Other  
Photos and Biographies*

**CROSS-COUNTRY STAR**—Since mat fans want to see the best wrestlers of every territory, it is not unusual to find Enrique Torres shuttling between the West Coast and Montreal. Torres, a native of Mexico, is one of the bright young stars in California, but he is also often seen up in Canada. His fighting weight is 235.



**LARRY MOQUIN**—A French Canadian, Larry is 26, 6' and weighs 220 lbs. He resides in Montreal with his parents and four brothers. Larry played football in high school and some hockey with the Montreal Royals of the Quebec Senior Hockey League along with Pete Marin and Gerry McNeil. He is a good friend of Phil Watson, ex-Ranger and coach of the New York Rovers, a farm club of the Rangers.



DROP KICK ACE—Mickey Gold, a top Canadian attraction, features fast and powerful drop kicks. He is married to an Oakland girl. He is extremely fast for his weight, 230. He is originally from Chicago. Gold stands 6 feet.

TALENTED FAMILY—Bobby Managoff, who is quite a package of wrestling talent, comes from a talented family. His father, Ivan, is a famous wrestler. His sister is Kay Armen, the singing star of "Stop the Music." Bobby weighs in at 235. He stands 6 feet.





LOOKING like something out of a Jack London story is Yukon Eric (Eric Holmbeck), top Canadian wrestler, and his favorite dog.

SKI HY LEE finds horse-back riding excellent relaxation from his heavy indoor wrestling commitments.



# 21. OUTSTANDING WRESTLERS IN BUFFALO

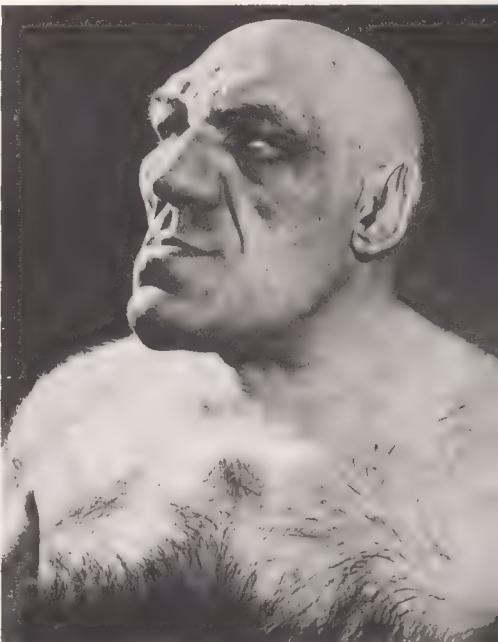
**Frank Sexton**  
**French Angel**  
**Chief War Cloud**  
**Yukon Eric**  
**Steve Casey**  
**Marvin Westenberg**  
**Jim Casey**  
**Johnny Berend**  
**Laverne Baxter**

See Chapter Two for Other  
Photos and Biographies



**KING ROUGH-HOUSE**—30-year-old Laverne Baxter has been pitting his 230 lbs. and 6'3" against most of the topnotchers for ten years. He has won the Canadian, Southern and South American championships. Played professional football in the Class B League down South. Former Canadian airplane pilot. Owns a farm.

**CHIEF WAR CLOUD**—Is a real Mohawk Indian. He is 6' and weighs 227. Has appeared in a Joe Palooka picture. At one time the Chief was a professional boxer.



**THE FRENCH ANGEL**—Maurice Tillet, in spite of his neanderthalic features, is not over average size or weight. A graduate of one of France's great universities, he forsook a brilliant career as a lawyer when he felt that certain unfortunate glandular disturbances which changed his appearance would handicap his efforts in court. He turned to wrestling at which he had been a great amateur competitor.



## 22. TOP MATMEN DOWN SOUTH

**Don McIntyre**

**Jack Ross, Jr.**

**Charles Harben**

**Dick Lever**

**Bob "Rebel" Russell**

**Bibber McCoy**

*See Chapter Two for Other  
Photos and Biographies*

**DICK LEVER**—Is 5'10" and weighs 215 lbs. He resides in Nashville, Tennessee. Has been wrestling as a pro for 12 years. At one time he was a middleweight fighter. He was taught by Jim McMillen who was looking for sparring partners at the time.

**BIBBER McCOY**—38, 5'11", 240 lbs. and resides in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He has been wrestling for 18 years. Played baseball with the Detroit Tigers in 1928 and '29. He was a catcher. He is a graduate of Holy Cross where he starred at football, baseball and track. He played pro football with the Old Providence Steam-rollers. Favorite hold is flying tackle.





**ROUGH RUSSELL**—They call Bob Russell "Rebel" for a good reason. He is always breaking the wrestling commandments. He is a rugged, tough wrestler who is originally from New England. He is considered the Southern States Champion. Russell weighs 210 and he stands 5 feet 11.



**DEFENSIVE STAR**—Most wrestlers concentrate on the offensive. But Don McIntyre, experts say, has developed a striking defensive style. He is from Cedalia, Mo. Well-liked, he owns a prosperous turkey farm. He is married. His fighting weight is 220. He stands 5'10".



CHARLES HARBEN—Six feet two, 230 pounds, Atlanta, Georgia. His brother is George Harben, prominent East Coast grappler. He's rough . . . his fast, sturdy legs make him a top scissors man.



SON LIKE FATHER—Jack Ross, Sr. is proud of his son, Jack, who has risen to become one of the wrestling stars in the Southern galaxy. Papa was one of the great popular matmen of years ago. Jack Ross, Jr. also instructs in football at Columbia, S. C. His weight, 215.

## 23. THE NEW YORK SCENE

WHY DO THE New York promoters and the upper hierarchy of wrestling look ahead to the greatest years the sport has ever known? Television? Not entirely. Is it a post-war reaction; a growing desire of a great mass of fans for a less intricate sport? Are people looking for a sport requiring less mental concentration? Ridiculous!

The wrestling promoters in New York today are, by and large, the same men who nurtured the Jim London-Strangler Lewis-Jim Brown-ing era into creating thousands of fans, and millions of dollars in gates. They recognize the more stable and positive trends, the more promising signposts, rather than those professed by numerous magazine articles and newspaper stories run throughout the country. These articles have shouted, "America is going mad about wrestling! . . . Out with the circus and the rodeo! Out with burlesque! Bring on the double wristlock and the flying mare" Cute words these. Easy reading too. But how they miss the point.

New York City, the heart of the television networks, served as the first incubator after the birth of wrestling's new popularity. Now a barometer of the fans' reactions to professional wrestling, New York points out the new trends in artistic, scientific, and literary developments.

What are these trends? The thousands of letters pouring into the N. Y. State Athletic Commission spotlight the fans' reactions. Letters criticizing and besieging the fine, efficient, but harried officials under Col. Eddie Egan, N. Y. State Athletic Commissioner; letters demanding the suspension of the "dirty wrestlers" of the game. Other letters ask for clarification of rules, and suggest revisions. Wrestling promoters are swamped with requests for pictures of the various wrestling stars. Gotham's wrestling telecasters, including yours truly, individually receive no less than a thousand letters a month with requests for statistics, background, and sundry wrestling data.

Developing this a little further, the wrestling announcers who first recognized this new fervor for wrestling now insist that the renaissance is approaching. Their mail, which was formerly predominantly from women, single or married, has now started to lean to the male side. In fact, wrestling is now getting the support of that certain age group which is the backbone of any sport; the youngsters of 10 to 20, who ultimately become the staunch, reliable fans of the future.

Travel through any New York street, any

public playground or community center. The talk among the youngsters is of wrestling. Where once their physical activities may have been confined to throwing a ball around, sending a basketball through a make-shift hoop, or possibly playing shinny with a home made puck, as in my youth, now you see them wrestling. They experiment with new holds. They haunt the arenas, making idols of outstanding grapplers, as of other great sport stars.

They are buying "how to wrestle" books in startling numbers. They are sending letters and making personal appeals requesting information on how to become wrestlers. And even further, the men they have chosen as their favorite stars reflect a real fan's appreciation not for ballyhoo, but for skill.

Here are the men in New York City who are the tops; who have won the support of the fans, and the idolatry of the youngsters.

Antonino Rocca, with his brute strength, unique wrestling style, plus his good sportsmanship, is probably the number one drawing attraction in New York City. Gene Stanlee, with probably the most beautiful physique in the wrestling business, his native American humor and fine strength, is a close second. Buddy Rogers is another top-flight performer. He is drawing tremendous crowds, and is rapidly becoming known as "the man you love to hate." Buddy is one of the cleverest wrestlers in the country today. For power and endurance, he bows to no one.

Brooklyn's Georgie Becker is one of the most consistent winners. Fans love him for his speed, and probably the widest repertoire of holds on the Eastern Seaboard. Tony Martinnelli, former Pacific Coast champion, is one of the greatest favorites of the youngsters. His footwork and balance are perfect, and he features some of the best wristlocks in the game. Then too, he is appreciated for his ability to be a good clean sport, or to adopt a 'get tough' policy, if need be. Another top-notcher is Lord Leslie Carlton, one of the best conditioned and agile men in the business. His drop-kicks have a dive-bomber ferocity and impact, and his bouts often leave the fans breathless.

There are many other great stars, too numerous to mention, who keep New York's wrestling arenas filled and happy. Wrestling has had to fight its way back to the big time in New York, as in many other places across the country. It is still making that fight, and unless it suffers a knockout, will surely get the decision at the end of the bout. It has already made its way back to Madison Square Garden, where in two great shows featuring Rocca vs.

Stanlee, more than \$100,000 in receipts were grossed. More than that, this summer it is returning to New York's Polo Grounds and the Yankee Stadium.

These are the trends, and these are the developments. The wrestling promoters have

seen and acknowledged them. They know too that the wrestling sport may not be privileged to enjoy as many comebacks as Sarah Bernhardt. They are putting their minds, their skills and their money to work. They are making the most of this one.

## TOP WRESTLERS IN NEW YORK

**Primo Carnera**  
**Gene Stanlee**  
**Rocca**  
**Buddy Rogers**  
**Lord Carlton**  
**Billy Darnell**  
**Golden Superman**  
**Tony Martinelli**  
**Marvin Mercer**  
**Chick Garibaldi**  
**Sandor Kovacs**  
**Ivan Kamaroff**  
**Ray Schwartz**  
**Al Alexander**



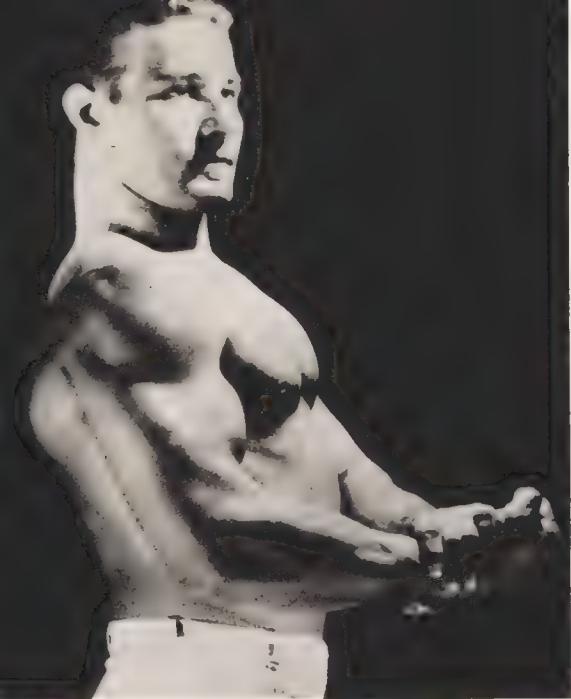
**SANDOR KOVACS**—One of the best wrestlers in the country today, Sandor is 27, 6' and weighs 212. He has lived in Canada most of his life. He is married to a professional actress and model. Served in the Canadian Army during the war. All holds.

**CHICK GARIBALDI**—6', 210 lbs., 30. He is the youngest brother of Gino Garibaldi. He has been wrestling for 8 years. Favorite hold is the Riviera Surfboard. Married, son. An all-around athlete, Chick is fond of sandlot baseball.



**AL ALEXANDER**—He is 32, 5'9", 202 pounds. Married, has two children, and resides in Brooklyn. Al has been wrestling professionally for fourteen years. A graduate of Brooklyn Tech, Al learned his wrestling at the YMCA. He held the Middle West Association junior heavyweight title in 1941. While in the army he captured the ETO championship. Has wrestled a 350 pound bear, "Gorgeous Gus." Recently appeared in "Inspector General" featuring Danny Kaye.





IVAN KAMAROFF—Brother of Joe Kamaroff, Ivan has been wrestling for 13 years. He is one of the most scientific in the game today. He is a strongman and weight-lifter. His favorite holds are the head and arm lock.



RAY SCHWARTZ—is 31, 5'11" and weighs 220 lbs. Ray has been wrestling for 10 years and is co-holder, with George Becker, of the Pacific Coast Tag Team Match Title. He is married and has two boys.

## 24. GREAT ALL-TIME WRESTLING STARS

BASEBALL TAKES legitimate pride in its Cooperstown Hall of Fame where it has brought together significant mementos of the glorious and honored national pastime. Wrestling hasn't had the opportunity as yet to assemble its past. Otherwise there'd be a hall jammed with original sketches of colonists wrestling during the frontier days; the gray canvas mats of circus fairgrounds; the ropes of the Gotch-Hackenschmidt match; the silken bathrobes and trunks worn by Londos and Strangler Lewis during their famous tilts; the early correspondence courses under the by-line of Farmer Burns. Though there's no hall of the past, the memories are still warm with the thoughts of the great cavalcade of America's top wrestling stars; wrestling's equivalent of Ruth and DiMaggio.

For the history of wrestling, which spans the bicycle era to diesels and jet propulsion, has brought forth great stars whose achievements have thrilled millions, and whose feats will endure as long as the art and science of wrestling endures.

Here are some brief profiles of some of the finest wrestlers this country has produced.

**THE GREAT FARMER**—The astounding feature of Farmer Burns, one of America's great all-time wrestling stars, was his light weight. Weighing a scant 158 pounds, he met and conquered all comers in all weights—

heavyweight, light-heavyweight, middle and lightweight. Old-timers still remember the time Farmer tangled with a lumbering Mack truck of a man, the Mohammedan mat ace, Haladalla, weighing in at 330. The ring practically trembled under the massive weight. But before long, Farmer had his giant opponent helpless and pinned. He lived wrestling, and often he would stop on the street, and go over the weak points of a bout with a wrestler, showing him exactly where he was vulnerable. A terror in the ring, Farmer often broke opponents' fingers and toes with his fantastically powerful leverage. Burns was born in Chicago. His father, an Irish immigrant, helped dig the famous Chicago canal system in the late 1890's. When Burns died in the 1930's he left a family, including two sons, one a musician, another a business man.

**HACK**—"I was not a good wrestler. I was very quick and very strong." So spoke a modest man recently upon his arrival in New York after many long years on the Continent. It was the great wrestling star, George Hackenschmidt. The fabulous Gotch-Hackenschmidt matches in Chicago at the turn of the century made the nation hold its breath. Throughout the country, people thronged to Western Union telegraph offices which offered many a ticker report of the match.





FRANK GOTCH

© Brown Bros.

Hack, the "Russian Lion," as he was billed, was born in Russia of a German father and a Swedish mother. After a brief fling at civil engineering, he finally wandered into wrestling, exciting attention in the gymnasium with his strength and power. Later he carved out a well-earned reputation by meeting the top matmen of the U.S.A. and conquering them. He is also known as an author of many books on psychology including "Consciousness and Character." He's fond of his Nice villa where he lives and enjoys the blooming of his fruit trees and olive orchards. Hack's fighting weight, 225. Height, 5 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

**THE GREAT GOTCH**—Here amidst a striking parade of sports personalities is Frank Gotch. Can you identify any of these men? L. R. Hugh McIntosh, famous Australian promoter; Tommy Burns, heavyweight fighter; famous John L. Sullivan. Beside Sullivan is Jim Coffroth, famous promoter, with Frank Gotch, who defeated Hackenschmidt in those famed bouts, at his right. The next in order are Billy Jordon, Bob Fitzsimmons and Stan-

ley Ketchel. Gotch, like most of the early American wrestlers, learned his craft in the private gym of Farmer Burns. Though versatile in all holds, the Midwestern wrestling star favored a unique and painful toe and crotch hold. Most of Gotch's wrestling was done in the West, but he did make occasional trips to New York for matches. He had one sad love affair. He wooed a girl in a travelling musical show, but somehow the relationship never jelled. In later years, Gotch took ill and died after shrinking mysteriously from 204 pounds (fighting weight) to less than 155. His height—5 feet, 11 in.

**THE FABULOUS MR. LEWIS**—Impressed by the wrestling fervor, the kingpins of wrestling have decided to engage a Czar of Wrestling who will iron out all the wrinkles that might jar the multi-million dollar wrestling revival. The individual they chose is one of the greatest wrestlers that ever stepped on to a mat—Ed "Strangler" Lewis. Lewis was notorious for his punishing headlock which could daze a man in a matter of seconds. His hold—developed from squeezing a simulated human skull gadget with a coil spring insert—brought him five world's heavyweight championships. To plan ahead is natural for "Strangler" Lewis, for he has a progressive attitude toward sports and new



STRANGLER LEWIS

developments. When the airplane got popular he was one of the first athletes to hop from state to state to fulfill engagements. Besides being wrestling's Judge Landis, Lewis is also active in national campaigns to undercut juvenile delinquency. In his day, Lewis was tops. His fighting weight ranged between 228 and 235.

**SCISSORS KING**—Joe Stecher, giving this youngster a piggy back ride, was one of the great wrestlers produced by America. At his peak, he averaged \$150,000 a year. Stecher was born April 5, 1896 at Dodge, Nebraska. Prior to his fabulous wrestling career, Stecher toyed with the idea of becoming a profes-

sors hold"—a painful crushing hold applied with the legs. Stecher's thighs were so heavily muscled and powerful that it is reputed that he could break sacks of wheat by crossing his legs and turning on the pressure. Stecher came of Bohemian-German parentage and made his professional debut in 1912.



JOE STECHER

sional baseball player. He was so good that he caught on with the Salt Lake City club of the Pacific Coast League in 1917. When he wasn't playing second base, he used to wrestle. The Phillies then decided to draft him for a major league try-out. But Stecher decided to quit baseball. He flung himself into wrestling and soon catapulted to the top, finally winning the world's heavyweight championship from Charles Cutler at Omaha, Nebraska. Stecher's famous hold which caused opponents to cry quits was the "scis-

**A BORN WRESTLER**—Here's John Pesek playfully demonstrating one of his wrestling holds on a friendly greyhound. "The master of 1,000 holds" is a trite, overworked phrase often employed to describe wrestlers. Yet John Pesek, one of the great all-time wrestling stars, is just that. An opponent once portrayed Pesek's style this way. "Holding him is like holding a powerful big fish. You couldn't hold him." Shifty, powerful, fast-thinking, Pesek was born in Fremont, Nebraska, where he began to "rassle" as a farm boy. No matter how strong his opponents were, it didn't matter to Pesek, who overcame the natural advantages of his opponent with his ring wizardry, balance and leverage. Though a fine, friendly character out of the ring, Pesek was strictly business in the ring, and extremely dangerous and aggressive. Pesek, who is still wrestling around the country, never depended upon any one hold but was adept at them all, including headlocks, toe holds and wrist locks. In appearance he looks gaunt for a wrestler, weighing only 190 pounds.



JIM LONDOS

**OUTDREW RUTH**—He came to the U.S.A. as a cabin boy on a Greek ship. Countrymen lent him money to settle and learn a trade in San Francisco. He learned his trade well and he was soon pretty competent both as an apprentice electrician and as an iron worker. In spare moments he attended the Olympic Club and got interested in wrestling. Soon he was a steady customer to wrestling matches, coming early to get a good seat in the fifty cent galleries. The rest of the tale of this ex-cabin boy is the tale of a fabulous sports idol and era. The wrestler, of course, is Jim Londos. He rose to become a top monymaker of sports, outdrawing, according to an International News Service survey, even Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey. In 1932, at the crest of the depression, Jimmy drew \$3,500,000. His great opponent-weakened was the crotch hold and after that would follow the famous Londos flying spin. Self-educated, intelligent, Londos has taken vocal lessons

and is reputed to be skillful on the guitar. Londos' fighting weight: 201-205.

**THE FARM AND THE MAT**—There is a strong link between the farm country and great wrestlers. Most of them did grow up under the open sky. One of the many examples of this is Earl Caddock, one of the finest American wrestlers, who was nurtured in Walnut, Iowa. His brief career impressed those in the "trade"—almost the highest form of praise that can be given to a wrestler. Experts believed that he was one of the most scientific wrestlers of all times. He depended on skill more than strength. Caddock, who weighed a little under 200, went on to win the heavyweight championship of the world, but World War I brought tragedy to Caddock and cut short his distinguished wrestling career. As a member of the AEF, he had gone to war and had gotten gassed. This affected his lungs and wrestling was out

of the question. But when Caddock was in good health he was one of the titans of the mat. As the late Sid Mercer put it: "Caddock was lighter than the others but tremendously agile and strong." Height 5 feet, 11 inches

**NO SPECIALIST, BUT**—Each of the famous wrestlers seemed to have one specialty—Lewis and his headlock, Stecher and his formidable scissors. Stanislaus Zybysko had his own, sheer physical power, and a mastery of the Graeco-Roman style of holds. They called him the "Bald Headed Eagle." Built close to the ground, Zybysko wrestled in some of the historic bouts in the last half century. There are his thrilling bouts with Lewis, in which he pinned Lewis and won the world's heavyweight title from Strangler in 1921. Later on, he took on another dangerous opponent, Earl Caddock, and succeeded in keeping his world's championship, two falls out of three—at the old Madison Square Garden. Prior to coming to the U.S.A. Zybysko had wrestled all over Europe, including India. In that country, he wrestled against the fabulous Gama. Later, his brother kept the Zybysko name shining with lustre, but Stanis-

laus is reputed to be the best of the brothers. They are among the first brother wrestling teams. Zybysko's fighting weight, 225.

**THE GREAT DEFENSE**—Wrestling consists of attack and defense. Many wrestlers are weak in one department and strong in another. Some, by virtue of physique, endurance and ability to wait it out, will slowly wear down an opponent. One of the great defensive stylists in wrestling was Marin Plestina, who was up there during the golden years of Lewis, Londos and Stecher. Whenever wrestlers gather, eating their usual breakfast of eggs, steak and mashed potatoes, they refer to Plestina as one of the greatest defensive wrestlers of all times. When he put himself on the defensive nobody could beat him. In the famous Madison Square Garden bout between Plestina and Pesek, Pesek, boxed in by Plestina's defensive strategy, got so annoyed and frustrated that he started to throw punches at Plestina. The referee broke it up—Pesek was disqualified and Plestina declared the winner. This is an example of winning an important bout solely by superior defense.

## 25. WRESTLING'S HUMAN CAVALCADE

HERE IS THE inside story on Primo Carnera's triumphant return to the United States. Primo was broke when World War II ended. Around the tag end of 1946 he began receiving frantic propositions from promoters in France, England, South Africa, South America. Nobody knew what to do with Primo, but they thought that his name—the prestige connected with the one-time heavyweight champion of the world in boxing—was worth its weight in gold at the box office.

Primo didn't know what offer to take—they all looked so tempting. One day before the amazed eyes of his wife, Primo spread all the offers on a large table. Mixing them up, he then closed his eyes and plucked one out of the heap. It was an offer from Mr. X, who had slight connections with boxing in California. He didn't know exactly what to do with Primo; in fact, his first thought was to turn Primo into a referee and send him out on tour. But when Primo arrived in America and started to

condition himself in a West Coast gym, everybody was startled to discover that the brawny Italian was an expert wrestler. He picked up opponents on the mat and flung them around like waffles in a griddle shop. Promoters got so enthused that they booked tours for Primo as a wrestler. Fantastic success followed, exceeding the wildest hopes of those who were in back of Carnera. Carnera was a crowd-pleaser. As it turned out, everybody failed to realize that before Primo started boxing, he toured the European circus units, taking on all comers as a wrestler.

During the late 1930's when wrestling was in its most mournful state, a sports skeptic walked up to Jim Londos and said in a sarcastic fashion: "Jim, how long you think the game will last?" Jim eyed the wrestling-baiter and replied, "I've been taught, and I believe that only the good will survive. Wrestling is good and it will survive."

## 26. THE LONGEST MATCHES

IF YOU VISIT the modern wrestlers at the dressing rooms after a bout, you'll find them winded and leg-weary, for the present day style emphasizes speed. In the old days, wrestlers went at their opponents at a slower pace, yet they fought bitter, grueling bouts that continued hour after painful hour. These matches are among the classics of incredible wrestling endurance, for they portrayed iron-willed men, refusing to knuckle down, though breaths came in slow, aching gasps.

Probably the most grueling and marathon-like bout of will and endurance was the bout that saw William Muldoon pitted against Professor Miller at Gilmore's Garden in 1900. They wrestled, without a stop, for 9 hours and 35 minutes to a draw.

Later, iron-man Muldoon, who seemed to have more energy than a ton of benzedrine inhalers, grappled with the famous Clarence Whistler in another drama-packed match at Terrace Garden in New York City. A brilliant account of that fight appeared in "*Muldoon: The Solid Man of Sport*," by Edward Van Every:

... "In January, 1881, came the first of Muldoon's three terrific matches with Clarence Whistler, which are counted among the epic struggles of the sport of wrestling. There have been few more grueling contests. Close to eight hours the first meeting lasted and without the scoring of a fall. At the finish the tights of the two were worn through at the knee and the exposed flesh was rubbed raw and bleeding. Whistler, who had wrestled in his stocking feet, had the soles completely worn away, and Muldoon's wrists were streaked with crimson lines from the pressure of his opponent's fingernails, Whistler having worn them long on purpose.

"After the match Muldoon suffered for weeks from a terrible sore on his back where the challenger had torn away the skin by grinding the hair of his head, which had been saturated with ammonia to aggravate the wound, against the flesh of the champion. Whistler had not escaped unscathed, by any means, in his vain attempt to torture Muldoon into defeat, for the Kansas Demon, as Whistler was known, had his left ear partially torn off in pulling out of a powerful headlock.

... The first Muldoon-Whistler encounter took place in the hall of Terrace Garden, then a famous N. Y. center for social affairs. Under the conditions of the contest, the men were to wrestle one hour, and if there was no fall in that time, then they were each per-

mitted ten minutes for recuperation and attention in their corners. The contest got under way at 8:45 and at the 1 o'clock rest Whistler was apparently the fresher of the two by far.

"Though Muldoon was regarded as a fast man for a heavyweight wrestler, he was no match for his rival when it came to agility. As they fenced for the opening Whistler would wheel like a flash and in a twinkling would be behind the 'brass button's pet' and have him pinioned in a waist hold from the rear. He carried the attack to Muldoon with a speed that had the latter harried and somewhat demoralized. So going into the fourth hour of the match the champion was pretty well used up, while the challenger was surprisingly fresh and confident.

"They had hardly come to grips again at the call of time when Whistler worked his way behind his man once more and, despite Muldoon's efforts to work himself loose, he was the victim of various punishing holds and was finally forced to go down on hands and knees and struggle against Whistler's efforts to turn him over. When he found his variety of holds and pressures would not budge the champion, Whistler resorted to the most painful trick of all, and for a considerable part of the next three hours Muldoon was the victim of this extreme torture.

"With the top of his head Whistler proceeded deliberately to bore away at the back of Muldoon's body just below the neck until he was grinding the latter's face into the mat that covered the center of the stage. And while holding his man in this position, Whistler, with the aid of his toes and legs, pried Muldoon about, inches at a time. The champion endured this with Spartan-like fortitude, plainly trying to conserve something of his tremendous energy. But it seemed as though there was no limit to the stamina of the challenger."

Another bone wearing struggle that gripped wrestling fans was the bout between Strangler Lewis vs. Joe Stecher. It was held in the farm belt area, Omaha, Nebraska, prior to World War I. They wrestled in the afternoon, and before long, as the two struggled on attacking and counter-attacking, the sun started to set. Dusk began to make the figures in the ring shadowy and ghostly. Finally the fans complained. Consequently cars were driven up the aisle and their headlights turned on. The match went on for five hours

and forty-five minutes, with Strangler Lewis finally pinning Stecher. Lewis had played a defensive role mostly and had worn down even the great Stecher. Finally at the close of the bout, Stecher was taken to the hospital, suffering from complete physical exhaustion. Lewis went to a dance.

A variation of the afternoon-into-evening wrestling bouts was the bitter struggle between Jim Londos and Everett Marshall in Philadelphia. The year was '38. They started wrestling—they were the feature attraction—at 10 P.M. They continued into the night, hour after hour until the clock said 3 A.M. in the morning. It had been a bitterly cold night and everybody's radiator froze. At that late hour, with everybody looking like extras from "Nanook of the North," the bout was called a draw.

Another struggle to complete exhaustion was that between Joe Malcewicz and Toots

Mondt in 1923. The place—Tulsa, Oklahoma. Wrestling in the early 20's was at a pretty fast clip, and this match kept going almost at complete top speed. Both athletes were in perfect condition.

As Toots recalls it: "Once you relaxed, you were done for. In a match like this you couldn't stop. You're young and determined, and you keep on going. You want to win badly."

Finally, after three hours and forty-five minutes of top speed wrestling, the bout was called. Joe Malcewicz was the winner by virtue of one fall.

When Mondt wearily went to his dressing room and put on his clothes he noticed a phenomenal slack in his trousers and coat. He had dropped 14 pounds, from 214 to 200. The next day Mondt ached all over. He could hardly move, and little fires seemed to dance up and down his bones.

## 27. TRACHOMA: WRESTLER'S DISEASE

TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, when a wrestler climbed through the ropes he faced not only the possibility of bone contusions, cracked skull, or broken bones, but something more menacing: trachoma. Today, there are many ex-wrestlers walking around half blind—or worse. The killer that robbed their eyesight was trachoma which came notably to wrestlers. An occupation disease, wrestlers got it from the mixture of ring dust and sweat; these substances formed little infectious granulations that caused half- and near-blindness to an array of wrestlers, including Ed "Strangler" Lewis. For two tortured, long, painful years between 1925-27, Lewis couldn't distinguish between light and darkness so bad had trachoma set in. Often he had to be guided to the arena. Trachoma, a highly communicable disease, was transferred both on the mat and in the dressing rooms. Common towels, and rolling over the mat transferred trachoma from wrestler to wrestler.

Modern medicine has practically eliminated

this bugaboo of the wrestling profession, first with a sulphate compound, and later, with penicillin injections. Today it's rare for a wrestler to contract and suffer trachoma.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Wladeck Zybyesco is now running a prosperous farm near Kansas City. It's a mixed farm; grains and cattle, and reports are that the ex-wrestling ace is very happy.

Many of the ex-wrestlers naturally have slid into promoting and arranging matches—something which they're fitted to do through years of experience. Among those engaged in this field are Paul Jones (Atlanta, Georgia), Tony Stecher (Minneapolis), Ed Don George (the upper New York State area—Buffalo), and Joe Malcewicz (San Francisco).

Jim McMillen, who had a piece of the Chicago Bears Football Team, occasionally comes out of retirement to wrestle. But Jim spends most of his time mixing in Indiana politics.

# 28. COLLEGE WRESTLING

THERE ARE TWO "wrestling universities" in the U.S.A.

Though they have other major sports, Oklahoma A & M, and Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Pa., for years have expended energy, forethought, and effort toward building up wrestling and wrestling stars. Consequently, each year with almost monotonous regularity, they almost always win and run away with regional and national honors of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Lehigh, a hotbed of wrestling, often has more than 5,000 persons jamming a college match. The town folks come as if it were an old-fashioned community house-raising.

Two of the cannier coaches of the art of wrestling are behind the wrestling achievements at these two universities—Art Griffith of the Oklahoma Wrestling Aggies, and Billy Sheridan of Lehigh. These boys would rather talk wrestling than eat. When they get through with teaching the basic holds, offensive and defensive strategy, the psychology of leverage—the youngsters have learned a lot. Result is that youngsters know the foundation holds like a geography teacher knows the capitals of the 48 states.

College wrestling, which is under the supervision of the NCAA, covers the country, and is divided into several regions—New England, the Southern Conference, the P.A. State Teachers, the Southeastern AAU, the Western Conference, the Four I Tournament, the Big 7 Conference, the Mountain States, and the Pacific Coast. Rules are strict, and they are for the protection of the young mat men whose lives could be bruised by rough-house brawling. Rough and anything-goes tactics is one thing for a professional; it's quite another to college wrestlers, who haven't as yet acquired the experience in lessening the impact of falls, painfully administered. The NCAA point system is worth noting for it portrays the whole character of college wrestling.

## SCORING PROCEDURE

All matches are nine minutes in length, divided into three three-minute periods. Whenever a fall is scored, the match is ended.

Matches not decided by falls are decided by the "point system." If each contestant has the same number of points at the end of nine minutes, the referee will determine the winner on the basis of superior wrestling ability or aggressiveness.

Bouts will begin and end when the referee sounds a horn or blows a whistle.

*Points are awarded by the referee on the following basis:*

TAKE DOWN—2 points—Taking opponent to the mat with advantage.

ESCAPE — 1 point — Escaping from opponent's advantage and gaining starting position on feet.

REVERSE—2 points—Escaping from opponent's advantage and gaining advantage while wrestling on mat.

NEAR FALL—2 points—Holding opponent's shoulders to mat for less than two seconds, or holding shoulders near the mat for two seconds.

TIME ADVANTAGE—2 points for two minutes or more; 1 point for less than two minutes but more than one minute advantage—Time on top of opponent while on mat.

STALLING PENALTY—1 or 2 points—Referee may penalize a contestant for stalling while wrestling either on the feet or on the mat.

Probably the nation's best college wrestling star developed in recent years, who has not yet succumbed to attractive professional lures (\$35,000 guaranteed salary), didn't come from any of the top "wrestling schools." City College of New York proudly claims him. His name, Henry Wittenberg, and his reputation is of a national and international stature following his Olympic triumphs.

Here are some of the supreme achievements of this great amateur wrestling star as set forth in the *Alumni Magazine of City College*:

"He is the only man ever to win seven National AAU Senior wrestling titles, a feat which he accomplished from 1940 to 1948 (he could not get away from his job in 1942, and was on active duty in the U. S. Navy in 1945).

"His mat career reached its pinnacle in London last summer at the Olympics when he captured the fancy of the crowd by pinning the British representative in 47 seconds. In the tense and dramatic finals, he was leading Fritz Stoekli, the Swiss representative, after seven minutes of the scheduled 15-minute match. At that point, Stoekli tore the cartilages which join Henry's shoulder and chest bones on his left side. But Wittenberg, in the same magnificent physical condition that had carried him to victory in the Olympic trials despite a badly swollen ankle, held on. He prevented Stoekli from pinning him, and won the world's light-heavyweight wrestling championship, helping the U. S. team to place second behind the Turkish entry."

# 29. FEMALE WRESTLING

YEARS AGO, A YOUNG, attractively proportioned woman, Cora Livingston, gave wrestling performances throughout the country. Nobody paid much attention. Today, they are paying plenty of attention in key cities throughout the country—in Minneapolis, Columbus, Dallas, Houston, Cleveland, Baltimore. For in these cities and many more female wrestling, either as an all-female card, or along with a male-wrestler card is drawing in the cash customers. And it's all a gold-mine to Billy Wolfe, an ex-wrestler, and owner of a phone company in Wheatland, Missouri, practically dead center U.S.A., population 300.

He manages most of the female wrestling talent in the U.S.A., including the recognized champion, Mildred Burke. All day long, there are two women handling mail and phone requests concerning the 50-70 wrestlers on Wolfe's string. In 1949, roughly 1,300,000 fans have thronged stadiums to see women wrestlers. Practically every night of the week, there are female wrestlers working somewhere—on some mat ring.

It goes big except in several states which outlaw female wrestling—New York, Illinois, Kansas, California, Colorado, Michigan and Connecticut. The rules differ state by state with New Jersey and Cincinnati being the most rigid. In New Jersey, for example, women wrestlers (1) are not permitted to touch the referee (2) they cannot wrestle on the mat and (3) they aren't allowed to use the ropes. Cincinnati referee fines female wrestlers if they persist employing certain holds, barred for women in that city. Mexico City, probably the most lenient in relation to restrictions, is the hottest town for lady wrestling. Women wrestlers draw fantastic gates there—and the rules are close to Texas rules, which are rough.

Most of the female wrestlers are a blend of brawn and beauty, easy on the eyes, and tough to tangle with on the mat. Mildred Burke, for example, is fairly typical. Pretty enough to model the latest mink and silver fox fashions for J. Thorpe, Mildred is all muscle, but neatly put together in an alluring package. In the ring she's a blue streak, worrying her opponents with her mastery of all holds, and possessor of sufficient leverage to dazzle anybody—pound for pound. When she gets loose she's like an uncontrolled panther. She's slight—135 pounds—and solid as Vermont marble.

A Kansas City girl, she first met Billy Wolfe, a YMCA instructor, by pestering him to teach her the art of wrestling. He didn't take to the idea. But whenever Bill had dinner at her mother's diner, at which Mildred helped out, she kept imploring. Finally he consented, and

was amazed by her native skill, endurance, and strength. Mildred's pretty bright, too. Recently, she won half of \$1700 on the Groucho Marx program "You Bet Your Life" for answering this jackpot question. What explorer explored both the North and the South Pole. Answer: Ronson.

Mildred and her corps of lady wrestlers are big business. Consider the figures of some of the biggest gates drawn by female wrestlers in the last few years.

## TEN LEADING GATES IN FEMALE WRESTLING

1. Mildred Burke vs. Elvira Snodgrass. Louisville, Ky. Attendance 18,000. \$25,000. 1941.
2. Mildred Burke vs. June Byers. Boston Gardens. Attendance 14,000. \$22,000. 1948.
3. Mildred Burke vs. Lupe Acosta. Monterey, Mexico. Attendance 14,000. \$20,000. 1939.
4. Mildred Burke vs. May Young. Minneapolis Municipal Auditorium. Attendance 12,000. Approximately \$12,000. 1944.
5. Mildred Burke vs. May Young. Oakland Auditorium. Attendance over 10,000. \$20,000. 1943.
6. Mildred Burke vs. Mae Weston. Kansas City Auditorium. Attendance 10,000. \$10,000. 1948.
7. Mildred Burke vs. Helen Hill. Dallas. Attendance 6,000. \$10,000. 1949.
8. Mildred Burke vs. Betty Nichols. Columbus, Ohio. Attendance 7,000. \$12,000. 1938.
9. Mildred Burke vs. Princess Rose Whitecloud. Houston, Texas. Attendance 6,000. \$8,000. 1939.
10. Mildred Burke vs. June Byers. Atlanta, Georgia. Attendance 5,000. \$7,000. 1948.

The girls are educated and intelligent and when they leave wrestling and get married, bear children and live ordinary lives. Though Mr. Wolfe regrets their leaving, he realizes that he can't stop the processes of affection. Girls will be girls even though they are wrestlers.

As wrestlers, here is the way they rate nationally, according to expert opinion:

## 10 LEADING FEMALE WRESTLERS

1. Mildred Burke	6. Elvira Snodgrass
2. June Byers	7. Theresa Theis
3. Nell Stewart	8. Mae Young
4. Violet Vian	9. Dot Dotson
5. Mae Weston	10. Celia Blevins



**VIOLINIST AND THE LADY WRESTLER:** Mildred Burke, world's champion female wrestler, is home only three months during the year. But when she returns to her California residence, she enjoys getting re-acquainted with her son, Joe, 15. Joe can wring sweet music out of the violin, which he took up on his own, without his mother's prodding.



PRETTY NELL STEWART came from a job as waitress in Birmingham, Ala., to professional wrestling, after training under old-timer Gladys Gillem. Nell, who is a curvaceous blonde, checks in at 5 feet 4, 140 pounds.



A DANGEROUS FOE, quick and powerful, Mae Young is one of the nation's top ten female wrestlers, earning upwards of \$10,000 yearly. Curvaceous and nicely put together, Miss Young is bombarded by requests for photos of herself, according to the two school teachers who handle promotion for Billy Wolfe's at Wheatland, Mo.

A STAR ICE SKATER who made good in big-time wrestling, pretty Therese Theis is one of the younger mat stars. Only 20, 5 feet 8 inches, a shapely 140 pounds, Therese was discovered and trained by Tony Stecher, brother of the great Joe Stecher.



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FROM SOUTHERN HILL COUNTRY is Elvira Snodgrass, whose bitterly-fought matches with Mildred Burke have set the pace for female wrestling competition. Snodgrass is a dangerous opponent but she can't solve Mildred's pinning hold, the painful "Alligator Clutch."



"LITTLE TIGER" is the nickname won by Violet Viann for her speed and agility on the wrestling mat. A neat 5 foot 2, 130 pounds, Violet is a natural athlete. Born in Kansas City, she now makes her home in Tulsa.



BLACK-HAIRED BEAUTY Celia Blevins, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian, left a promising career as a nurse when she took up wrestling. The 25-year-old star from McAllister, Okla., can meet the best in two out of three falls matches.



A CIRCUS ACROBAT who never lost her love for the sawdust and spangles, Mae Weston is a seasoned trouper who rose to wrestling stardom. In her early '30s, black-haired Mae has toured the whole country. Columbus, O., is her home base.

DRIVING A CAB, strangely enough, started 20-year-old Dot Dotson on her wrestling career. Promoter Phil Duffy was passing by when she "handled" a trouble-making fare. Duffy trained the 155-pound girl from Lakeland, Florida, into a top-notch wrestler.



A GAL FROM TEXAS who relaxes in a rodeo, Houston-born June Byers is one of wrestling's hardest stars. Auburn-haired June, 5 feet 7, agile at 150 pounds, plans to turn promoter when she quits the mat—but that's a long way off.

# 30. WRESTLING I.Q.

1. Are wrestlers subjected to the same medical examinations, before they enter the ring, as given to fighters?

Yes. Doctors assigned by the state athletic commissions check the heart, lungs, reflexes of all wrestlers before they engage in a bout.

2. How many officials are there in a wrestling bout? Usually three. Referee, timekeeper, and judge.

3. What's under the wrestling mat? How heavily padded are they and can a wrestler be injured by falls from contact with the mat?

Generally, beneath the mat there is a wood base. Wood, of course, gives a little bit, and is less liable to hurt the wrestler than a floor of concrete. The padding in a mat is comparable to an ordinary floor rug covered with a sheet of duck's canvas. Concerning falls, a wrestler can be injured by falls regardless of the padding.

4. What decides or who decides whether a match should be ended by a time limit or whether the wrestlers should continue to a fall?

The time schedules for bouts are generally made up in advance. Usually all the bouts up to the main attraction have a time limit. In many states where there is an 11 P.M. curfew, a decision must be made at that time for the main event. States having more elastic rules allow the main event to go on till a pinning.

5. Are there any funds set aside to aid old and poverty-stricken wrestlers?

In many states, a poverty-stricken wrestler seeking financial assistance may be aided by the National Sports Alliance. This organization gets a slight cut out of tickets sold to boxing and wrestling attractions. When boxers and wrestlers are in need, they can apply for relief to this organization.

6. How long does the average wrestler last?

Longer than most professional athletes. Jim Londos is still active at the age of 64.

7. Are the rings—the wrestling areas—standard, or do they differ in size?

Most of the rings are standard: 18 feet by 18.

8. Are there any outstanding Negro wrestlers?

There are many outstanding Negro wrestlers. Two of the best are Jim "Panther" Mitchell, and Sellee Samara.

9. How does wrestling compare with boxing as a body-builder for growing youth?

Experts believe that wrestling is far superior to boxing as a body-builder. Then, too, the brain is not apt to be injured in wrestling, whereas in boxing, sharp punches to the head can cause permanent or dangerous brain injury.

10. Who was the greatest single money-maker in wrestling?

Jim Londos reputedly was the greatest single money-maker in professional wrestling since the days of Farmer Burns.

11. What exactly is the point system in wrestling and how does a wrestler earn a point during a match?

The point system is employed mostly by amateur wrestling—at colleges and in clubs supervised by the national A.A.U. (see account of collegiate wrestling for an analysis of the point system). In professional wrestling, the point system, usually, is bypassed.

12. Who is called the "father of U. S. wrestling"? The old Omaha master, Farmer Burns.

13. Did Rocca ever kill a man in the ring?

A. There was a Japanese wrestler who was making a swing through Argentina and he was taking advantage of the Argentine wrestling rules which permit a wider variety of dangerous holds than elsewhere. A plain pernicious sort, he would snap bones and tear ligaments before his unfortunate opponents would have a chance to signal ENOUGH. As a result, all Argentina was steamed up over his unnecessarily brutal methods. The Japanese wrestled with Rocca when resentment against him burned flaming white. Naturally, this feeling was even more manifest in the wrestlers themselves. Thus when Rocca held his opponent aloft his shoulders in an Argentine backbreaker the crowd cried for revenge and stubbornly the Japanese wrestler refused to give up. He died as a result of fighting this deadly hold.

14. How many pounds does the average wrestler lose during a match?

It all depends on the physical structure of the wrestler. Wrestlers who are out of condition and flabby lose more than those who are in top shape. But most wrestlers report that they lose 8 to 10 pounds during a match. One heavy meal, however, is enough to replace the lost poundage.

15. What happens to the reflexes of an opponent who is being whirled in an airplane spin?

He loses the ability to judge distance from the ground. He cannot, therefore, prepare himself properly for the coming fall.

16. How long can a wrestler hold a tight lock, with his fingers, at full strength?

Ordinarily, four to five minutes.

17. In what country did catch-as-catch-can wrestling originate?

It is believed that the catch-as-catch-can style started in the days of the American frontier; some of its roots can be seen in the Indian "rassling" style.

18. How does one go about becoming a professional wrestler?

Wrestling requires considerable attention to body building and instruction in holds and counter-holds. Youngsters, interested in wrestling as a career, are best advised to take up the sport in their local high school. If the local high school is not geared for this type of instruction, he should seek out the local A.A.U. club in his region which generally offers instruction in wrestling. Contact the National A.A.A., 233 Broadway, New York, for information concerning the A.A.U. clubs. You may also contact your own state A.A.U.

19. What do wrestlers consider the foremost ingredient toward a successful wrestling career?

The proper use of leverage and a good sense of balance.

20. Is it important to be as finely conditioned for wrestling as for boxing?

No. Most wrestlers agree a little girth is necessary to help cushion against the shock of falls and pressure.

21. What injuries are common among wrestlers?

Broken fingers, strained backs and necks.



Guy and "Pream"

## GUY Le BOW

33 year old Guy Le Bow is acquiring an ever-growing national reputation as one of the nation's crack young sports broadcasters. Le Bow's sports coverage from Madison Square Garden and key neighborhood clubs like the Ridgewood Grove are considered sparkling examples of video sports reporting. Among his mike achievements have been his brilliant handling of the New York Yankees in 1947. His masterful word pictures—that never interrupt the action—spared garlands of praise from many, including Columnist Dan Parker, Len Cohen of the New York Post. Jimmy Powers, the Daily News sports editor, tagged Le Bow's authoritative yet lively reporting "outstanding." Le Bow has covered every sport—baseball, basketball, boxing, football, and even table tennis. His ice hockey telecasting from Madison Square Garden, over New York's WPIX, Le Bow's flagship station, is considered matchless.

Adding lustre to his already solid reputation has been Le Bow's thrilling reporting of the wrestling scene, and its amazing post-war revival. They're so good that even wrestlers send him fan mail. The secret of Le Bow's superb handling of the wrestling scene is this: his commentary always adds to the image, giving the viewer, the wrestling fan, a deeper appreciation of what his naked eye is seeing. Le Bow is able to accomplish this by weaving in analysis, technical data contrasting the wrestlers' styles...leverage...chief holds. More than that, he salts his vivid on-the-run sports commentary with news breaks, inside stories, that he gathers in painstaking, round-the-clock interviews with the men who make the sports headlines.

Le Bow, a graduate of New York University, has played football, basketball, and for a time, was a pitcher in semi-pro baseball. He started his sports broadcasting career in radio in 1938. In his leisure moments, Le Bow enjoys good music, books concerning archeology, and collecting George Washingtonia. Le Bow owns an original letter penned by Washington to a nephew in which the First President bequeaths his sword to him, with a proviso that it be wielded only against tyranny but never for tyranny. Le Bow lives in New York City and is a member and former vice-president of the highly respected Sports Broadcasters Association.

**RUSS HODGES**, ace sportscaster for the New York Giants: "Guy Le Bow's 'The Wrestling Scene' is a buy for anybody wanting to know about wrestlers and wrestling. It's chockful of interesting facts. I recommend it highly."

**JACKIE ROBINSON**, the Brooklyn Dodgers sensation: "Every page of 'The Wrestling Scene' I found entertaining and worthwhile."

**GIL HODGES**, Dodgers' brilliant first-sacker: "The stories of the old-time wrestling stars, the illustrated holds and the portraits of America's present-day stars are alone worth the price of admission. And you've got plenty of other exciting features, facts and pictures."

**DON DUNPHY**, great ABC sportscaster: "Guy Le Bow has done a job that needed doing. Until Guy Le Bow's 'The Wrestling Scene' there were few sources a wrestling fan could turn to. It's quite a book."